



PLAN THAT
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key to success **C1**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

PROUDLY CALGARY SINCE 1883

POSTMEDIA

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DARREN MAKOWICHUK

A SHOW OF STRENGTH

Dad David and his son Ewan White were among the hundreds of people who came out to participate in the 44th annual Terry Fox Run for cancer research on Sunday at The Confluence Historic Site, formerly known as Fort Calgary.

16th Ave. opens
after water main
repairs wrap up

Businesses hoping for a return
to normal after a drop in traffic

STEVEN WILHELM

Businesses affected by road closures along 16th Avenue N.W. will have some relief, as the city reopens the road after water main repairs.

On Sunday, the final section of 16th Avenue was open to traffic, with partial lane closures still in place near 43rd Street N.W., said water services director Nancy Mackay during an afternoon update. She said lane closures will accommodate bringing the feeder main back into service and allow

for the completion of "curb and gutter work."

If all proceeds as planned, Mackay said it's expected Calgary can return to normal water use on Sept. 21 or 22.

Elizabeth Booth, owner of The Good Samaritan Thrift Store near 16th Avenue is hopeful that traffic will return to her business, which has seen a drop in business of about two-thirds since repairs began.

"It's gonna make it tough to make the lease payment at the end of the month," Booth said.

SEE REPAIRS ON **A2**

Premier defends decision
to 'rethink' reconfigured
Green Line LRT project

HIREN MANSUKHANI

Premier Danielle Smith defended her government's decision to withdraw funding for the reconfigured Green Line LRT on Saturday, a day after Calgary's mayor reiterated the province's vision for the project is not feasible.

"At some point, someone had to say, 'this is not a viable project that is being proposed,'" Smith told her weekend radio show audience.

"It was a 46-kilometre route that was initially proposed for about (\$4.5 billion). Now it's a little stub of a line, nine km that goes from nowhere to nowhere; \$6.5 billion."

Smith has billed the funding decision as a "rethink," adding the city's shortened route that eliminated five planned stations, from Ogden south to Shepard, would have led to a 40 per cent drop in

ridership. Instead, the province is considering alternate routes because, Smith said, tunnels that would have been dug below the ground under the city's plan are problematic due to the presence of underground rivers.

The province has commissioned an independent review, to be completed by December, of other routes that connect with the existing Blue and Red lines at a future centralized station near the event centre site.

"The first step is going to be a re-engineered look at how we can build the south line all the way out to Seton, which is what was promised to Calgarians," the premier said on Saturday, explaining that she thinks the north and south legs should be considered separately, and may not be part of the same line.

SEE GREEN LINE ON **A2**

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What makes
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growing demand
for adorable
mini animals **D2**



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The City of Calgary has issued several reminders that Montgomery businesses were open while repair work was underway. PHOTOS: STEVEN WILHELM

City is 'not offering any relief'
to businesses hurt by repairs

REPAIRS FROM A1

Booth said the store went from making \$300 per day to barely over \$150, with some days dipping as low as \$60.

"I don't know what they (the city) could have done, because they do have to rip up the roads, I understand that," said Booth.

This marked the second time that road closures for repairs to the Bearspaw south feeder main have affected businesses since the initial burst on June 5.

"They're not offering any relief to any of the businesses, other than when the flooding occurred," she said. "They're not accounting for people not coming to the area because of the traffic."

Officials from the City of Calgary have issued reminders during several afternoon updates that Montgomery businesses were open and

accessible to customers while work was underway.

Corry Reddekobb, assistant manager at Rack Attack on 16th Avenue, described business as "drastically" slower since repairs began, with road closures near the car accessory store.

"We still have (had) access, it's just a little bit harder to get to us," Reddekobb said.

They've remained open seven days a week throughout the construction, he said, still getting calls from customers asking if they're open.

He noted that a neighbouring business, that was closed on Sunday, has told him they lost 80 per cent of their clientele during repairs.

"When people start realizing that everything starts to come back and open, it's going to be like nothing ever happened... here's hoping



Corry Reddekobb, assistant manager at Rack Attack, says business has been "drastically" slower during repairs to the feeder main.

of course," said Reddekobb.

Some closures remain along 33rd Avenue N.W., and Mackays said they anticipate opening the section east of 83rd Street by Tuesday, with the whole of the road sometime during the week.

"We will continue to connect with those directly impacted by the construction to share our progress and to discuss plans to reinstate sidewalks, driveways

and landscaping that have all been impacted by the repair work," said Mackay.

Calgary's water use was in the sustainable "green" zone on Saturday at 471 million litres.

Mackay also urged citizens to continue water use reductions by eliminating outdoor watering, keeping showers under three minutes, skipping flushes and only running full loads of laundry.

'We want to see this built properly'

GREEN LINE FROM A1

"We want to see if there's a better way to do it that will actually get these lines far enough out to where the people actually live," she said.

"I hope Calgarians understand we want to see this built properly, too."

Calgary city council is to receive an update Tuesday on the Green Line's incurred costs and how it might turn over management to the province.

That decision was made after Transportation Minister Devin Dreesen wrote Mayor Jyoti Gondek to state the province would no longer contribute its \$1.53-billion share of the \$6.3-billion project, following council's approval of a shortened alignment for the first phase of the LRT.

On Friday, Gondek, after speaking to the Calgary Construction Association about the troubled project, said various configurations have been studied and rejected over the past decade.

"The (province wants) to take a line to go from Seton up to the event centre at a bare minimum and figure out how it ties into downtown," she told reporters.

"There's simply not enough capacity on the Red and Blue lines, as they exist on 7th Avenue, to take on that much ridership; you would have to take the Red Line off of 7th and move it over to Stephen Avenue, and you have to bury it. You can't put it at grade, or you'll kill all the businesses that are thriving there."

Several city advocacy groups intend to participate in a rally outside city hall at noon Tuesday in support of the Green Line project.

Ryan Anderson, lead organizer of the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good, told Postmedia his group wants both levels of government to be more transparent in their communication.

"We have a bunch of people speaking into the media who are not actual experts in transit, and what we need is shared governance and shared direction for this proj-

ect," Anderson said Saturday.

"Both the city and the province have to be responsible for the project, including funding and implementation, and both need to be able to build this project, not based on the opinions of people who aren't experts, who don't have all the facts, but they need to find a way to go forward in the best interests of the people."

Smith agreed better communication is needed, stating the province and federal government, which is also covering one-third of the total cost, need to be more involved in future discussions.

"I feel in looking at the process we've been disconnected from it, as have the federal funding part-

ners and even council has really delegated the oversight to an independent board and things went a little off the rails, shall we say, because of that," she said Saturday.

Gondek told the construction industry audience the city remains in an "untenable" position if it's to put work on hold and wait until late December for the results of the Alberta government's review.

"I don't know how much we will be expected to pay out to contracts that we no longer can complete. I don't know what's going to happen with the cars that we ordered, the light rail vehicles that we've ordered. We're liable for that. This is an incredibly serious situation for our city," Gondek said.

When asked Saturday why the province didn't intervene or pull its funding support sooner, Smith presented an alternate narrative.

She said Municipal Affairs Minister Ric McIver told city officials the project couldn't proceed without a line connected to the downtown LRT network, and warned that cost overruns would result.

When the city said it would assume any cost overruns, "Ric said, 'OK, if you're prepared to take the risk of a cost overrun, it's all yours.' And then, you know, five minutes later, when the cost overrun was materialized, they came back asking to share in our cost," Smith said.

The mayor said Friday the province has taken charge of the project.

"If the provincial government wishes to do an LRT project that is in the spirit of the Green Line, and they want to bring a proposal forward to the city, of course, we'll entertain it," she said. "Right now, we are not a partner at the table."



Premier Danielle Smith has called the decision to withdraw funding for the Green Line a "rethink," saying the city's shortened route that eliminated five stations would have led to a 40 per cent drop in ridership. BRENT CALVER



DARREN MAKOWICHUK

TINY BUBBLES Quin and Townes Edney have fun with the bubble machine on Sunday during the annual University Block Party.

Jasper restaurants owners face uncertainty as businesses reopen

As the town recovers from wildfire, there is worry about the lack of visitors, staff

PETER SHOKEIR

Jasper continues to travel down the slow road to normalcy, with more local businesses including the start of restaurants reopening.

When re-entry began in mid-August, The Stand Easy at the Jasper Royal Canadian Legion was the only location in the townsite that could serve food.

"It was rewarding, but tiring, but my heart just feels so amazing, knowing that I could do this and get in here and take care of everybody," said legion manager, Sue Henderson.

"Seeing all the people coming in getting food, it was just like, 'Well, at least I'm feeding somebody.'"

The legion provided free meals to residents, first responders and workers — some days seeing 1,000 people.

These free meals were made possible by donations, and the Lion's Club helped serve meals.

After weeks of being a community hub, the Legion winded down its free meal service on Labour Day weekend. This comes as more restaurants begin to reopen and residents get new fridges and freezers.

The legion is back to its regular schedule and meals but is still offering some free food to first responders and Team Rubicon. It is also housing Team Rubicon and the Jasper Local Food Bank in its backrooms.

"We're still trying to make sure our community is taken care of," Henderson said.

"If anybody comes in, they lost

a house or they just want to talk, we're still here for them."

Like other restaurateurs, Henderson is facing a drop in revenue due to a lack of visitors and would have to rely exclusively on locals.

"We're Jasper, we're tourism, and if we don't have the tourism, where are we going to be?" she asked.

SnowDome Coffee Bar resumed operations 2½ weeks ago. Owner Shelley Koebel has also reopened Coin Clean Laundry at the same location, and Andromeda Cafe on the floor above will reopen in a few days.

"We were fortunate to be one of the first customers of one of the cleaning crews, and we had a team of probably 20 people that came in for about four days," Koebel said.

She noted that they had a team of 15 staff pre-wildfire, but with five of them losing their homes and others being seasonal workers who found other jobs in other communities such as Banff or Revelstoke, only five staff members have been able to return.

In terms of customers, Koebel reported seeing "a really interesting cross-section of people," including returning locals, first responders and workers who have been assisting with recovery and cleanup.

Koebel is uncertain about the future. She was concerned about the lack of tourism and the large fire loss across the street.

"Twenty businesses have been destroyed or damaged on Patricia Street, and that means for us that we lose those people who are cus-



Rachel Bailey is co-owner of the Peacock restaurant in Jasper. As local businesses reopen, some are concerned how revenue will be affected because of a lack of visitors. DAVID BLOOM

tomers," she said. "A lot of the shop owners and their team members would be our customers, but it also means there's less for people to do when they're downtown. They're not going to be able to round out their day as much."

She added how it had been a challenging couple of years because of COVID, the Chetamon wildfire and now the Jasper Wildfire Complex.

"We just are really grateful for the community that comes for a cup of coffee every day or to do their laundry, and Jasper is a strong community," she said.

"We're kind of shortened now; we don't have as many people, so I just hope that we can, as a business community, keep it together to weather the next few years of building and recovery."

Stuart Back, chief operating officer of Banff Jasper Collection by Pursuit, said they were working to get their restaurants ready.

Crazy Elk Cafe at Lobstick Lodge recently opened and Pursuit plans to open its remaining restaurants in a staged manner.

"Restaurants are the most work. They're a lot of work to get cleaned up and get back open," Back said. "But our team's very focused."

Back added that reopening hotels would be essential for restaurants that rely on the visitor economy.

"We're certainly beginning to hear the inquiries and requests from other businesses in town who are getting ready to try and reopen," he said.

Although more trails, day-use areas and businesses have reopened in recent days, sections of the park and town remain closed. Visit Parks Canada's website for more information on closure areas. A list of open businesses can be found on the municipality's website.

Local Journalism Initiative

Banff names new fire chief

Veteran firefighter brings 30-plus years of experience

JESSICA LEE

Banff's new fire chief, Keri Martens, brings more than 30 years of experience to the position, including 18 years leading the Lake Louise fire department.

"In Lake Louise (in 1991), there weren't a whole lot of options. I had friends on the department at the time and they encouraged me to come down and check it out. It didn't take long after that I realized there just wasn't another place I wanted to be," the Saskatoon-area native said of her start in Alberta.

Martens joined Canmore Fire-Rescue's ranks as deputy fire chief in 2018, and in spring 2023 joined Banff's ranks as deputy fire chief.

Martens is succeeding former Banff fire chief Russ Geyer, who retired at the end of August after 16 months as fire chief and three decades with the department.

"We're very fortunate to have Keri," said Geyer. "To bring Keri on and having worked with her for a year-and-a-half has made for a terrific transition."

Geyer, who was born and raised in Banff, had plans to start a career in education before he fell into and stoked a passion for firefighting.

He spoke highly of the department's community involvement, which he said has only grown over his 33 years in service.

"That hasn't changed. That's the wonderful part about it ... We are a real part — a caring part — of the community and respected by the community, and in turn, we give 100 per cent back," Geyer said.

"That's something that's been consistent and I've been very proud of over all these years."

Martens said much of that backing, in the community and in the field can be credited to strong and supportive leadership.

Martens, who was the first female board member named to the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs in 2017 and has worked with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, looks forward to continuing to champion diversity in what is a traditionally male-dominated profession.

Being one of few women working in the field was not something that fazed her much in the early stages of her career.

It wasn't until her daughter, who is now almost 14 years old, told her she wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps and become a firefighter, that she gave the issue more thought.

"She was little. She was maybe five, and it was like 'oh, I guess I better get more involved to really make sure that this is an environment that I would encourage my daughter to join,'" said Martens.

It was the driver for Martens to become involved provincially and internationally to advocate for diversity in firefighting, for all walks of life.

"I've been in a room full of fire chiefs where I've been the only woman. I've been in rooms full of a variety of different leaders or managers for different departments in a variety of places, where I've not necessarily been taken as an authority figure, because I am a woman, but I strongly believe we are getting better," Martens said.

Martens expressed enthusiasm for the future of Banff's fire department emphasizing a collective commitment to advancing wildfire mitigation efforts as a key focus for the mountain town.

"Definitely, wildfire mitigation is a huge focus of probably all of ours — moving that work forward and continuing to build and grow this department and make sure that we're in the best position to take care of our residents, our visitors and each other," Martens added.

Rocky Mountain Outlook

Actor Dinklage forced to withdraw from Calgary film festival gala

The Calgary International Film Festival's opening gala has lost some star power with the late withdrawal of actor Peter Dinklage.

Festival organizers announced Saturday that the Game of Thrones star won't attend next Thursday's red carpet debut of his latest film due to obligations elsewhere.

"Unfortunately this is out of our control and Peter's devastated not to be able to make it this year," acting executive director Katherine Penhale said in a release. "We'll

look forward to inviting Peter back to CIFF in the future."

Dinklage stars in The Thicket, a turn-of-the-century western filmed in rural areas around Calgary in March 2023.

Those still expected to walk the red carpet at the Jack Singer Concert Hall include Latin Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter and actress Leslie Grace, British director Elliott Lester and The Thicket author Joe Lansdale.

It's the first time since 2019 the



Peter Dinklage

festival has held an opening gala, and not since 2017 have performers tied to the opening film walked the red carpet.

Dinklage's production company, Estuary Films, is among the producers, as are Chad Oakes and Mike Frislev of Calgary's Nomadic Pictures. The crew was made up of a number of local film workers.

The festival will run until Sept. 29 at various venues in downtown Calgary and on screens at Scotiabank Theatre Chinook.

Alberta town sets rules for how its staff to be treated

JACK FARRELL

An Alberta town has laid out rules for how residents must treat municipal staff and the consequences if they step out of line.

Ben Gronberg, a councillor for Devon, Alta., about 25 kilometres southwest of Edmonton, says nothing specific triggered the new code of conduct, which is meant to protect staff from mistreatment and abuse.

Gronberg did, however, say he thinks there's a growing trend across the country for public servants to be yelled at, bullied or harassed by members of the public.

"As a municipal council, our job is to take care of administration and employees who are putting themselves in front of the public," he said.

Devon's code of conduct, which was unanimously approved by council last week, establishes steps the town can take when residents display "inappropriate behaviour" toward employees.

That includes threatening or hostile actions, harassment, bullying and overall "unwelcome conduct."

The first step the town would take if a resident mistreats a staff member is to issue a warning. If the behaviour continues, the town can limit the person to a single point of contact with the municipality or limit all communications to a single mode, such as email.

The most severe measure is to ban residents from accessing certain municipal facilities or from "conducting business" with the town.

Devon's chief administrative officer, Corey Levasseur, said the town developed the code as a proactive measure, as it's not common for staff to report negative interactions with residents.

"Town administration is confident that through this policy, the many positive interactions that we currently experience with the public will continue to grow in number," he said.

However, Levasseur said he also sees a growing trend of municipal employees being mistreated by members of the public.

Devon isn't the first municipality in Alberta to adopt a code of conduct for residents. Lethbridge, Alta., approved a similar policy in July.

"Sometimes the interactions between staff and the community, on very rare occasions, can go off the rails," said Lethbridge Coun. Belinda Crowson. "Our front desk staff certainly has had issues."

"Sometimes it's yelling and shouting, (and) sometimes it's simply the number of times people consistently reach out."

Lethbridge's policy also allows it to limit how residents can contact the city or restrict access to services if a resident repeatedly mistreats employees.

Crowson said Lethbridge tried very hard to balance protecting its staff from mistreatment as well as the rights of residents to contact their municipal government.

Tyler Gandam, the mayor of Wetaskiwin, Alta., and the president of Alberta Municipalities, the organization that represents towns, villages, and cities in the province, said he's not surprised to see these policies adopted.

He said Wetaskiwin's staff have been yelled at in person and over the phone. Recently, a resident speaking to a staff member referred to January's city hall shooting in Edmonton and said "it's not surprising something like that would happen."

Gandam called it a "veiled threat, but a threat nonetheless."

Wetaskiwin hasn't adopted its own policy yet, he added, but it has been discussed.

"The old adage the customer is always right doesn't work when somebody's mistreating you, yelling at you, swearing at you or threatening you in any way," he said.

He said policy alone isn't enough to prevent municipal staff from being mistreated and there also needs to be a "cultural shift."

"You can have every well-meaning policy and expect people to treat you with respect," Gandam said.

"But if they're not willing to do that, or if they don't have that mindset where they're willing to treat somebody else with respect, no amount of policy is ever going to fix the problem."

The Canadian Press



The Roys — Mike, Harper and Heather — pose during Evelyn's Epic Birthday Bash outside their home in southwest Calgary on Sunday. Evelyn's family has been honouring her memory by fundraising birthday bashes since she died at 11 in 2020 after a battle with cancer. PHOTOS: STEVEN WILHELM

Girl's legacy lives on in annual birthday bash hospital fundraiser

STEVEN WILHELM

For the fifth consecutive year, friends and family of the late Evelyn Roy commemorated her birthday while raising funds for the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation.

Evelyn died in February 2020 at age 11 after a two-year battle with neuroblastoma (a type of cancer). This year would have been her 16th birthday.

"We keep thinking about we should be buying a car and teaching her to drive, and (how) she'd be in high school," said Heather Roy, Evelyn's mom. "We don't get to do any of those things with her."

"We miss her more than I think I have words to explain. I mean, of course, we would much rather be celebrating with her in the backyard with a couple of her friends, but that's not our reality."

Heather said they chose to find "light in dark spaces," and do something significant to honour her memory.

Evelyn loved dancing.

"She had dance parties in hospital rooms, in the kitchen, in the car, in hallways. It didn't matter where we were," said Heather.

Dubbed Ev's Epic Birthday Bash,



Bikers Against Bullying roll up to a driveway dance party in memory of young cancer victim Evelyn Roy at her parents' home on Sunday.

friends, family and others who knew Evelyn took over a portion of the street near the Roys' home in Woodlands on Sunday to commemorate her.

Amid the tunes of a DJ, there was plenty of dancing, music, princesses and more at Ev's Epic Birthday

Bash this year.

"It's such a true and honest way of honouring who she was as a person, because she did just love having people together and gathered," Heather said.

"These dance parties were a big part of our life, especially when she

was in treatment. They were the thing that lightened up our hearts and brought us joy."

Over past years, they've raised around \$300,000 for the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation.

This year, Heather says they've set a goal of \$50,000 to be put toward the hiring of a child life specialist at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre.

"One of (Evelyn's) dreams was to have a child life specialist available for kids who receive radiation," said Heather.

She said kids have to go to an adult hospital for their radiation treatments, and because of that, there's no resources in those spaces.

"A child life specialist will work specifically toward creating resources, but they also work with the kids to explain their procedures, to make them feel safer," she said.

When people come to Ev's Epic Birthday Bash, Heather hopes they feel the way Evelyn made everyone feel: "full of light and goodness and happiness."

"She was silly and fun and adorable, and she knew how to make everybody feel special and included."

With files from Postmedia News

U.K. connection brings together TDS and its new managing director



DAVID PARKER
Around Town

Ryley Moskal says it's perhaps growing up in Banff — mixing with the many international students who worked there during ski and golf seasons — that led him to have an ear for accents.

It's been helpful in his new appointment as managing director, North America, of Test Driven Solutions (TDS) with a head office in Newcastle, U.K., where the Geordie accent is not the easiest to understand.

Moskal moved to Calgary from his mountain home to attend university to study to be a lawyer. But after graduating with his B.A. Law and Society degree, he realized that it was not the career path that he wanted. He opted for technology and joined the newly launched Calgary firm of Robots & Pencils where he finished up as vice-president strategic projects in his eight years there.

The next move was as founding team member of the Calgary office of U.S.-based Copia Wealth Studios where he led strategic planning, the build-out and commercialization of products.

The TDS connection came

through its CEO Sam Clark who had returned to his native Newcastle after living for a time in Canmore 14 years ago as a devotee of our Rocky Mountains — and Calgary. As his company became successful in providing a quality augmented service, supplying high-calibre consultants to support organizations and assist with the delivery of ongoing projects and programs, Clark first expanded TDS operations in North America, and chose Calgary as its continental headquarters.

He says he enjoys the city which is culturally aligned with the north of England and has good people. He is most impressed with the energy of the city's educated employees and the growth of its high technology sector.

His office opened here in 2021 and has grown to a staff of 16 program developers who have been busy with Calgary clients, but it needed a leader to strategize for growth and to market the firm to other potential users in a broader range of industries. Clark had been impressed with Moskal during his visit to Calgary and finally persuaded him to join TDS as managing director, bringing his proven experience in driving business growth and delivering strategic technology solutions. He will focus on Fortune 500 and top Canadian and U.S. clients in industries such as finance, oil and

gas, logistics, safety, transportation and technology.

Noting that Moskal is attuned to Calgary's economy and its strong tech sector growth, Clark said, "Ryley's experience leading high-quality teams, with a focus on innovation and strategy make him an ideal leader for our North American expansion. At TDS we foster a culture of collaboration and global connectivity, which is why it was so important to bring on a leader based in Calgary."

Clark added, "We've always sought to ensure that our clients and team receive the full benefit of our wide-ranging experience, by having team members from our Newcastle and European offices work in Calgary, and vice versa."

TDS provides solutions to clients as an off-site development team or by adding extra firepower to in-house software parties, offering individual software consultant or full team support for short- and long-term projects.

Moskal noted, "I'm a believer in helping companies achieve exceptional results by bringing in world-class teams that accelerate that mission."

The international collaboration allows TDS to offer a blend of local insights and global expertise. Clark added, "Whether it's tapping into the technical strengths of the office in Calgary or leveraging innovative solution from the 120 staff in the U.K. and



Ryley Moskal

Poland, TDS provides a seamless, integrated approach to meet unique client needs."

On Sept. 18 Silvera for Seniors is celebrating the opening of its latest affordable home for seniors, Livingston Terrace Apartments at 49 Livingston Hill N.E.

Already near capacity, the 47 units in Phases 1 and 1A are part of a mixed affordable housing project containing a range of affordable non-market and below-market rents. None will exceed Calgary's average market rent as established by CMHC.

The buildings were made possible through partnership with Brookfield Residential and a significant financial investment from Silvera and its government partners: Government of Canada (through CMHC), Government of Alberta's Affordable Housing Partnership Program, and the City of Calgary.

Silvera's housing portfolio has more than 1,805 units in 28 supportive and independent living communities in neighbourhoods across the city.

David Parker appears regularly in the Herald. Read his columns online at calgaryherald.com/business. He can be reached at 403-830-4622.

AN EDITION OF
NP
in the CALGARY HERALD

WITHOUT THE NDP'S HELP, THE LIBERALS WILL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MORE THAN JUST CONFIDENCE VOTES IN THE FALL SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, AS THEY WON'T HAVE A PARTNER TO HELP PASS THEIR LEGISLATION. [PAGE NP3](#)

B.C. WILL FORCE ADDICTED INTO CARE

TOXIC DRUG CRISIS

Premier says hundreds of beds to open up

JOSEPH RUTTLE

VANCOUVER • B.C. Premier David Eby has decided the escalating toxic drug crisis warrants forcing those who are severely addicted and mentally ill into involuntary care.

The first of these secure facilities will open soon after minimal renovations on the grounds of the Alouette Correctional Centre in Maple Ridge. Eby said a total of more than 400 beds will open in hospitals across B.C. by modernizing 280 outdated beds and creating more than 140 new ones, with more to come.

"All of the facilities will provide involuntary care under the B.C. Mental Health Act for people certified as requiring that care," said Eby at a news conference outside Vancouver City Hall on Sunday.

The premier said treatment beds will open inside prisons, too, starting with 10 beds inside the Surrey Pre-trial Centre.

The guidelines for how and when a patient can be taken into care involuntarily under an existing section of the Mental Health Act have been outlined in a memo being distributed across the province by Dr. Daniel Vigo, B.C.'s chief scientific adviser for psychiatry, toxic drugs and concurrent disorders.

Vigo was appointed earlier this summer to draft the plan to address the Canada-wide mental health and drug addiction crisis that disproportionately affects B.C. communities.

As Vigo points out, involuntary care is needed for a minority of those with concurrent disorders who are unable to reach out for help and make the decision themselves, "and their brains and our communities are paying the price."

See INVOLUNTARY on NP3



CHRISTOPHER KATSAROV / THE CANADIAN PRESS

Air Canada and its 5,200 pilots reached a tentative agreement on a four-year contract just after midnight on Sunday.

Air Canada shutdown averted

MAURA FORREST
in Montreal

Travellers, business groups and politicians expressed fervent relief on Sunday after Air Canada and the union representing thousands of its pilots negotiated a new labour deal and averted a disruptive, countrywide shutdown.

Canada's largest air carrier announced shortly after midnight Sunday that it had reached a tentative, four-year collective agreement with the Air Line Pilots Association.

The deal, reached after more than a year of contract negotiations, ended the possibility that the 5,200 Air Canada pilots represented by the union could be locked out or walk off the job. Any such move would have forced the airline to suspend nearly all operations, a prospect that raised concerns among business groups, passengers and even the prime minister.

At Toronto's Pearson International

DEAL BETWEEN PILOTS, AIRLINE BRINGS HUGE RELIEF TO PASSENGERS, BUSINESS GROUPS

Airport, travellers preparing for Sunday departures were breathing a sigh of relief.

"I wasn't looking forward to an Air Canada strike, because I booked this ticket like a month and a half back, so a last-minute change would have been pretty bad," said Arjun Pandit, who was heading to New York City for work. "It would have halted the entire trip."

Donna Holloway, who had booked a connecting flight to Chicago, said

she hadn't made any backup plans and would have tried to change her flight at the airport if a work stoppage had been announced. She received an email Sunday morning saying her flight was still scheduled. "I was really confident that they would settle the dispute and so far I've been happy," she said.

Federal Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon issued a statement shortly after the deal was announced praising both sides for avoiding a work stoppage.

The tentative agreement averts a strike or lockout that could have begun as early as Wednesday for Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge, with flight cancellations expected before then.

"The new agreement recognizes the contributions and professionalism of Air Canada's pilot group, while providing a framework for the future growth of the airline," the carrier said in a statement.

It said Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge will continue to operate as normal while union members vote on the tentative four-year contract.

See DEAL on NP3

Venezuela says it arrested 6 foreigners allegedly involved in plot to kill Maduro

U.S. DENIES ROLE

MANUEL RUEDA

BOGOTA • Three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech citizen were arrested Saturday after Venezuelan officials accused them of coming to the South American country to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro.

The arrests were announced on state television by Diosdado Cabello, the nation's powerful interior minister. Cabello said the foreign citizens were part of a CIA-led plot to overthrow the Venezuelan government and kill several members of its leadership. He showed images of rifles that he said were confiscated from some of the alleged plotters.

The arrest of the Amer-

ican citizens included a member of the Navy, who Cabello identified as Wilbert Joseph Castaneda Gomez. Cabello said Gomez was a Navy Seal who had served in Afghanistan, Iraq and Colombia. Spain's embassy in Venezuela did not reply to a request for comment on the arrests of its citizens.

The U.S. State Department late Saturday confirmed the detention of a U.S. military

member and said it was aware of "unconfirmed reports of two additional U.S. citizens detained in Venezuela."

"Any claims of U.S. involvement in a plot to overthrow Maduro are categorically false. The United States continues to support a democratic solution to the political crisis in Venezuela," the statement said.

The announcement of the

arrests comes just two days after the U.S. Treasury imposed sanctions on 16 allies of Maduro who were accused by the U.S. government of obstructing voting during the disputed July 28 Venezuelan presidential election, and carrying out human rights abuses.

Earlier last week, Spain's parliament recognized opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez as the winner of the

election, angering Maduro allies who called on the Venezuelan government to suspend commercial and diplomatic relations with Spain.

Tensions between Venezuela's government and the U.S. have increased as well following the election, whose result sparked protests within Venezuela in which hundreds of opposition activists were arrested.

The Associated Press

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NEWS

Young people drinking more sugary drinks

Global increase linked to rise in obesity

IAN McMAHAN

Despite concern about sugary drinks and health, global consumption of the sweetened beverages by young people has increased by 23 per cent, according to recent research.

Researchers from four countries looked at data from global surveys of 1.4 million children and adolescents, ages 3 to 19, conducted from 1990 to 2018 and found that the rise in consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks occurred at the same time as an increase in obesity among young people.

Globally, according to the research published last month in the British Medical Journal, from 1990 to 2018, intake of sugar-sweetened beverages increased by almost an eight-ounce serving per week, a 23 per cent increase during that time period. The increase was nearly double that seen in adults over the same period. For a portion of the study period, 1990 to 2005, among the 25 most populous countries, the United States saw the largest increase in consumption, over 43 per cent. For the complete study period, 1990 to 2018, the largest increase was seen in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sugar-sweetened beverages are any liquids sweetened with added sugars, including regular soda, fruit drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened waters and coffee and tea beverages with added sugars. They are the leading source of added sugar in the American diet, according to the CDC, and one of the contributors to the rise in obesity and its related health problems around the world.

The researchers wrote that young people are often the target of food marketing, both for their current intake and preferences as they develop into adulthood. They believe that it is critical to understand and control intake of these beverages as they found a positive correlation between intake and prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents. Of particular concern, the researchers write: "Obesity in childhood tends to persist into adulthood, increasing the risk of Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and premature mortality."

The Washington Post



MICHAEL PROBST / AP PHOTO

A participant clears the bar during the first German Hobby Horsing Championship in Frankfurt on Saturday

Hobby horse championship gallops through Frankfurt

HAPPY, STRONG COMPETITORS SHRUG OFF CRITICISM

STEFANIE DAZIO
AND DANIEL NIEMANN

FRANKFURT, GERMANY • Germany's first hobby horsing championship got underway in Frankfurt on Saturday, with hundreds of young riders competing in time jumping, style jumping and dressage on their wooden stick horses.

Roughly 300 riders — mostly youngsters, but there were about 20 adults enrolled — cantered around a gymnasium Saturday and Sunday, watched by 1,500 spectators. The competition is part of a growing wave of hobby horsing events internationally: the United States and Australia also held their first championships this year.

"Hobby horsing just gives me self-confidence and I just enjoy doing it with other people," said Max Gohde, a 15-year-old competitor from Gifhorn, Germany, who has

been practising since 2020. "And now there's also this atmosphere here, where everyone is just happy for you. And I think that's just really cool."

The events stemmed from a grassroots movement in Finland, where riders trotted their hobby horses through Nordic forests more than 20 years ago. The pastime has since exploded in popularity through social media during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, and it has been credited with highlighting female empowerment for the enthusiasts.

"Of course, when you see it like that, it looks funny at first. In fact, it really is a strenuous sport. It's a mixture of athletics and gymnastics, and you need to be in good shape for it," said Andreas Karasek, managing director of public relations of the German Hobby Horsing Association.

The association was es-

tablished a year ago with just 13 members. Now there are more than 5,000 active athletes and more than 200 clubs across the country.

Felicia Walter, 18, a hobby horsing fan from Wiesbaden, says she wants to take part in the championship next year. "And it used to be that we were laughed at for it," she said. "But when you're part of a larger group, I think it always works and especially now, when you see something like that, you get a feeling of togetherness."

Kay Schumann, president of the German Hobby Horsing Association, said children and young riders brought hobby horsing to Germany through social media. They swapped videos and images with each other, and built a community around the shared interest.

"It spread like wildfire," he added.

Julia Mikkonen, head of

the Finnish Hobbyhorse Association, said hobby horsing combines Finnish handcrafting culture — some riders make and decorate their own sticks and stuffed horse heads — with gymnastics and sport.

"It was very important to us to set an example and make the sport more popular," said Kay Schumann, president of the German Hobby Horsing Association. While organizers want to promote empowerment and acceptance through a positive and inclusive experience for competitors, critics have pounced on the activity. Many riders have faced bullying and misogynistic comments online. Other detractors say the pursuit is not a sport.

Mikkonen countered that just like in other sports, hobby horse riders need athleticism, strong core muscles and stamina to succeed.

The Associated Press

Champion tree climber turns her work as an arborist in Winnipeg into a passion

PHYSICAL, MENTAL

STEVE LAMBERT

WINNIPEG • Climbing up trees, wrangling with ropes and navigating twisted odd-angled limbs may not be everyone's idea of a great day.

But it is to Jordyn Dyck, who has turned her job as an arborist into a passion leading to international tree-climbing competitions.

"(In my) mid-20s, I had tried a bunch of different jobs — mostly labour-intensive ones — and just nothing was really fulfilling my soul in the way that I kind of needed. And then somebody told me you could climb a tree (for work), and that felt like a good path to follow," she said while trimming a large oak towering over a two-storey home in west Winnipeg.

"I think my favourite part is that it's so hard. It's impossible to kind of perfect it. You have to be mentally strong,

physically strong. You've got to have a good understanding of biology and physics and angles and forces ... every day is a new puzzle to solve."

Dyck was urged several years ago by her boss at Trilogy Tree Services to enter competitions. Now in her 30s, she has racked up an impressive number of wins, most recently at the annual Prairie Chapter Tree Climbing Championship last month in Calgary.



KAYLE NEIS / POSTMEDIA NEWS

Arborist Jordyn Dyck of Winnipeg in action at a tree-climbing competition in Regina in 2022.

That secured her a spot in an international championship next year in New Zealand. Later this year, she's headed to another international event in the United States.

Tree climbing is hard work, she said.

It was evident as she demonstrated throwing a line over a large limb, climbing more than 10 meters up and walking along limbs without getting snarled by leaves and sharp branches.

"It's definitely the most difficult thing I've ever done physically, for sure. It just challenges every single muscle in your body every day."

Competitions can test every facet of an arborist's skill set. It's not just about speed — competitors earn points in a series of events that focus on accuracy, safety and other factors.

Climbers can be required to toss throwlines at targets set up in a tree. They may also have to simulate work duties, such as using a handsaw or pole pruner while high in the air. There is also a simulated aerial rescue, where competitors have to safely get another person down from a tree.

Points can be deducted for anything from an unsafe manoeuvre to breaking a tree limb.

Dyck figures the tallest tree she has climbed competitively was about 23 metres in Tennessee. Tackling the giant Redwoods along the Pacific Coast is on her "bucket list."

The Canadian Press

FLORIDA

TECH BILLIONAIRE RETURNS TO EARTH AFTER SPACEWALK

CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA. A billionaire spacewalker returned to Earth with his crew Sunday, ending a five-day trip that lifted them higher than anyone has travelled since NASA's moonwalkers.

SpaceX's capsule splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico near Florida's Dry Tortugas in the pre-dawn darkness, carrying tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, two SpaceX engineers and a former Air Force Thunderbird pilot.

They pulled off the first private spacewalk while orbiting nearly 740 kilometres above Earth, higher than the International Space Station and Hubble Space Telescope. Their spacecraft hit a peak altitude of 1,408 kilometres following Tuesday's liftoff.

Until now, all spacewalks were done by professional astronauts.

The Associated Press

U. K.

HARRY GETS BIRTHDAY WISHES FROM ROYALS

LONDON Britain's royal social media accounts posted 40th birthday wishes Sunday for Prince Harry, marking the milestone celebration despite long-standing strains following the publication of his explosive memoir, "Spare."

The Royal Family site shared an image of a beaming Harry with a birthday cake emoji and the caption "Wishing The Duke of Sussex a very happy 40th birthday today!" The Prince and Princess of Wales shared the image, adding their own birthday wishes.

The post from the Royal Family account marked the first public birthday message for Harry since 2021.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex announced they were giving up royal duties in January, 2020.

The Associated Press

ASIA

POPE REMINDS WORLD HE CAN DRAW A CROWD

DILI, EAST TIMOR It was the farthest trip of his pontificate and one of the longest papal trips. But Pope Francis, age 87, hobbled by bad knees and bent over with sciatica, appeared to be having the time of his life.

With half of East Timor's population gathered at a seaside park, Francis couldn't help but oblige them with a final good night and languid loops in his popemobile.

Francis defied the doubters who had questioned if he could, would or should make such an arduous trip to Asia.

"How many children you have!" Francis marvelled to the crowd of 600,000. "A people that teaches its children to smile is a people that has a future."

The moment seemed to serve as proof that Francis still could pope, still likes to pope and has it in him to pope.

The Associated Press

TORONTO FILM FEST

‘THE LIFE OF CHUCK’
WINS PEOPLE’S
CHOICE AWARD

The Toronto International Film Festival’s People’s Choice Award went to The Life of Chuck, handing Mike Flanagan’s Stephen King adaptation one of the most-watched prizes of the fall film festival circuit. The audience award for top documentary went to Mike Downie’s The Tragically Hip: No Dress Rehearsal. The People’s Choice Award for The Life of Chuck was announced Sunday as North American’s largest film festival drew to a close. *The Associated Press*

Involuntary
care to be
provided in
B.C. prisons

INVOLUNTARY
Continued from NP1

Asked about doctor and nurse shortages in the sector, Vigo said his team is working on a framework to adequately staff these expanded facilities, including boosting compensation to doctors and health professionals willing to take on the challenge.

“People with addiction challenges, brain injuries and mental-health issues need compassionate care and direct and assertive intervention to help them stabilize and rebuild a meaningful life,” said Eby.

“This announcement is the beginning of a new phase of our response to the addiction crisis. We’re going to respond to people struggling like any family member would. We are taking action to get them the care they need to keep them safe, and in doing so, keep our communities safe, too.”

Eby acknowledged the tipping point for his decision was a fatal attack by a mentally ill man in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside earlier this month, and the death of a 13-year-old girl from an overdose after her family was unable to get her into care when she refused and was deemed a mature minor.

Eby said for every person who dies from an overdose, there are many others left with traumatic brain injury from the effects of repeated overdoses.

“The toxic-drug crisis of today is not what it was 10 or even five years ago,” said Jennifer Whiteside, B.C.’s minister of mental health and addictions. “We are now facing a rising number of people who are living with the lasting ef-

“THE TOXIC-
DRUG CRISIS
OF TODAY IS
NOT WHAT
IT WAS 10 OR
EVEN FIVE
YEARS AGO.”

fects of multiple overdoses and complex mental-health challenges, tied to social factors like poverty and trauma.

“It’s clear we must do more to provide effective care, while continuing to work with our partners to tackle the deadly poisoned-drug supply and bring an end to this suffering.”

After the first secure facility opens in Maple Ridge, the province is looking into sites in northern B.C., the Interior, Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, with the aim of keeping those taken into care close to their home communities.

Other facilities will allow those who are arrested to be assessed in hospital and placed in care inside correctional institutions across B.C.

Eby supported involuntary care during his 2022 election campaign, but held off when he became premier because of blowback from advocates. He said at the time that the move would not survive a challenge under the Charter of Rights, but said on Sunday that the province is in the middle of defending the Mental Health Act against a court challenge to involuntary care.

Postmedia News



SPENCER COLBY / THE CANADIAN PRESS

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre addresses his caucus in Ottawa on Sunday. Poilievre made clear last week that he will use his party’s first opposition day as a confidence vote and attempt to bring down the government.

Progress on
wages, rules,
retirement

DEAL
Continued from NP1

Air Canada said the terms of the new deal will remain confidential pending a ratification vote by the membership, expected to be completed over the next month, and approval by the airline’s board of directors.

The union issued a statement after midnight Sunday, saying if ratified, the tentative agreement will generate an approximate additional \$1.9 billion of value for Air Canada pilots over the course of the agreement. The deal also represents progress on several key issues, including compensation, retirement and work rules, she added.

Air Canada said customers who changed flights originally scheduled between Sunday and Sept. 23 under its labour disruption plan can change their booking back to their original flight in the same cabin at no cost, provided there is space available.

A full-scale shutdown seemed likely in the days leading up to Sunday’s announcement. The two sides had said they remained far apart on the issue of pay, a central sticking point in the negotiations.

Air Canada and numerous business groups had called on the government to intervene in the matter, including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Canadian and U.S. Chambers of Commerce.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce joined the chorus of those voicing relief on Sunday.

“We hope to see (the tentative agreement) ratified by membership in the coming month, putting an end to the uncertainty of Canadian travellers, as well as businesses and communities who depend on Air Canada’s cargo network every day,” CEO Candace Laing said in a statement.

The deal averts travel disruptions for the 670 daily flights on average operated by Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge, and the travel of more than 110,000 passengers.

The Canadian Press

Trudeau Liberals
face tough time in
House without NDP

Opposition MPs
can delay and
obstruct bills

RYAN TUMILTY

OTTAWA • Without the NDP’s help, the Liberals will have to worry about more than just confidence votes in the fall session of Parliament that begins Monday, as they will no longer have a partner to help move their legislation through the House of Commons.

For the past two years, in addition to protecting the Liberals from confidence votes, the NDP helped the Liberals pass legislation and avoid some of the procedural delays that opposition parties can use to block the government agenda.

Opposition MPs can extend debate in the House of Commons for days to delay a bill, introduce other motions that delay proceedings and obstruct work in committees to slow legislation even if it ultimately has the support to pass.

At his party’s caucus retreat, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh said any help his party offered at parliamentary committees or in the House

of Commons should no longer be counted on.

“All bets are off. We’ve torn up the agreement with the Liberals. That means they can expect no help and no support from us,” he said. “Anything that happens in Parliament will be based on ... the best interest of Canadians.”

In previous sessions, the NDP supported the Liberals on a few occasions to invoke closure, effectively limiting the amount of debate so legislation can pass more quickly.

Liberal House leader Karina Gould said she is hopeful her party can find a path to work with both the NDP and Bloc Québécois to advance legislation. She said both parties grew tired of Conservative delay tactics in the spring session.

“Whether you’re a Liberal, NDP or Bloc Member of Parliament, you’ve come to Ottawa to actually work for Canadians. And so, I think that’s what we’re going to continue to be able to do, just advance the work of parliamentarians despite the shenanigans of the Conservative MPs.”

In addition to whatever new legislation the Liberals might table, the governing party had multiple bills left over from the spring session.

The so-called “lost Canadians” bill, which would

restore citizenship to people born outside of Canada to Canadians who were also born outside the country, was only in the early stages of debate when the House of Commons rose in June.

A new bill that would make sweeping changes to the military justice system is also waiting on the books, as are proposed changes to open up more days for voting during a general election.

The Liberals’ online harms bill, which proposed to create a new digital safety commissioner and require social media companies to remove harmful content, also only cleared first reading in the House of Commons.

Gould said all of those bills will be priorities early in the session.

The House of Commons also contains rules that allow for opposition days, where the opposition parties set the rules for what is debated.

There will be seven of those days during the fall session, but it is up to the government to set them. The Conservatives will get the majority of those days.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre made clear last week that he will use his party’s first opposition day as a confidence vote and attempt to bring down the government.

Gould said she has no plans to approach the opposition days any differently than in past Parliamentary sessions.

“It’s just business as usual,” she said. “I’m going to, you know, move them forward as we typically do.”

National Post
rtumilty@postmedia.com

CANADA

Poilievre
talks
‘nuclear
winter’

Carbon pricing,
economy top
targets, MPs told

ANJA KARADEGLIJA

OTTAWA • Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre signalled the Liberals’ carbon price and the economy will remain his prime target when Parliament resumes this week.

He painted a dystopian picture during a Sunday speech to his caucus, saying the Liberal government’s plans to increase the price would cause a “nuclear winter” for the economy.

“There would be mass hunger and malnutrition with a tax this high ... our seniors would have to turn the heat down to 14 or 13C just to make it through the winter,” Poilievre said. “Inflation would run rampant and people would not be able to leave their homes or drive anywhere.”

The Conservatives are the last of the major parties to have a fall strategy session after the Liberals, NDP and Bloc Québécois all met last week.

Poilievre has maintained his party’s commanding lead in the polls throughout the summer, and is preparing to make another push to topple the Liberal government as early as this week.

All parties are adjusting their autumn plans after NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh ended the agreement that was ensuring Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government would stay in power.

Poilievre has promised to bring in a non-confidence motion at his first opportunity, and that could happen as early as Monday. The Tories would likely need the support of both the NDP and the Bloc to pass the motion, which appears unlikely.

Last week, Singh criticized both the Liberals and the Conservatives over their approaches to fighting climate change, but wouldn’t say whether he would keep the consumer carbon price if his party forms government after the next election.

The Canadian Press

Liberal minister clashes with Musk over satellite offer

ARI DAVID BLAFF

Canada’s industry minister dismissed on Saturday as “nonsense” Elon Musk’s suggestion that his satellite company, Starlink, could provide Canadians with internet access at a fraction of the federal government’s newest plan.

On Friday, the Liberal government announced a \$2.14-billion loan to Telesat, a Canadian communications company based in Ottawa. The money is aimed at helping Telesat’s low Earth orbit satellite boost reception, particularly for Canadians in remote parts of the country.

Prime Minister Justin Tru-

deau celebrated the Telesat deal, telling reporters it is “fundamentally about making sure that Canadians and people in more distant communities, in smaller northern communities and in remote parts of the world can be connected to the transformation and the progress that the world is seeing at increasingly destabilizing speeds.”

A federal government press release touted that the deal would lead to “supporting 2,000 jobs across the country through Telesat and its supply chain,” in a move hailed by François-Philippe Champagne, the minister of innovation, science and in-

dustry.

The deal was condemned by Conservative MP Michael Barrett, representing the Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes riding, who asked Musk online to weigh in on the matter.

“Hey @elonmusk — how much would it cost to provide @Starlink to every Canadian household that doesn’t have high speed?” the parliamentarian asked on X on Saturday morning. “If this \$2.14 BILLION plan is the panacea of expanding access, competition, and service — where is the interest from private investors and banks?”

The billionaire founder of Tesla responded to Bar-

rett later in the day, asserting that Starlink could have provided the service for, “Less than half that amount.” Musk’s comments prompted Barrett to call it “a common-sense solution for Canada.”

The exchange drew the ire of Champagne, who denounced Barrett’s challenge by taking a shot at Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre.

“Typical (Pierre) Poilievre ‘nonsense,’” the industry minister weighed in on Saturday night. “They’d prefer giving money to foreign billionaires instead of supporting our industry and our workers.”

National Post

WORLD

IRAN'S EFFORTS TO RE-ENGAGE WITH WEST FACE NEW CHALLENGES

Ties to Russia, war involvement hurting cause

SUSANNAH GEORGE, KAREN DEYOUNG, AND SUZAN HAIDAMOUS

Since coming to power in July, Iran's new political leadership has signalled its interest in re-engaging with the West — which could bring restored ties and sanctions relief for the isolated country.

For Iran, engagement is more difficult now than ever. Tehran is deeply enmeshed in the Israel-Lebanon conflict. The nuclear deal is in tatters. Sanctions have crippled the economy. And last week, the United States accused Iran of sending ballistic missiles to Russia and imposed new sanctions.

Still, regional diplomats and officials say, the developments last week are unlikely to derail Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's efforts to bring his country out of isolation, which one Arab diplomat described as the country's "only option."

"In this case, time is not on Iran's side," said the diplomat, who meets regularly with Iranian officials, and who spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject. He said Iran appears eager to secure some kind of progress toward engagement to relieve domestic and international pressures.

When Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the sanctions last Tuesday, he addressed Iran's diplomatic overtures directly.

"Iran's new president and foreign minister have repeatedly said that they want to restore engagement with Europe, they want to receive sanctions relief," he said. "Destabilizing actions like these will achieve exactly the opposite."

The sanctions appear milder than expected, when European countries warned Iran that ballistic missile transfers to Russia approximated a "red line" in the Ukraine war. The measures largely target Iran's civil aviation and could take months to go into effect.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said the weapons transfer allegations were a "vile propaganda ploy and a blatant lie."

The ballistic missile deal with Russia, which the U.S. Treasury Department alleged was negotiated long before Pezeshkian took power, is an example of how Iranian policy often plays out on two tracks, according to Nicole Grajewski, a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment.

"While civilian leadership may push for reform or diplomacy, the military and security apparatus maintains its own long-term goals, often independent of the political leadership," said Grajewski, author of the book *Russia and Iran: Partners in Defiance* from Syria to Ukraine.

Just a few months into his term, Pezeshkian is juggling multiple crises at home and abroad. The war in Gaza has dragged on for nearly a year, and in that time Israel has traded nearly daily fire with Hezbollah, Iran's most powerful allied militia. Do-

mestically, Iran's economy has hit record lows. And widespread frustration over the use of heavy-handed tactics by security forces continues to simmer.

After the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July, Iran vowed a "decisive" response. That was over a month ago. U.S. officials believe that every day that passes lessens the chances of a major incident and escalation, although additional American military assets remain in the region as a deterrent.

Since Pezeshkian's election, Iran has indicated to the Biden administration that it is interested in talks, but U.S. officials are waiting for signs of support from Iran's supreme leader, who is the ultimate decision-maker.

"By standing with Russia in its war, Iran is defending its interests and existence," said a Lebanese official who deals regularly with Tehran, speaking on the condition of anonymity. The official said the most recent sanctions on Iran are part of a policy to put it under "constant pressure," but recently, he said, that approach appears to be yielding diminishing returns.

"These sanctions have become a double-edged sword," he said, adding that they have crippled Iran's economy and ability to project power but have also necessitated stronger ties with countries such as Russia.

Iran has continued to advance its nuclear program and thwart international inspectors. Uranium-enrichment experts have been barred from inspection teams and Iran has failed to explain uranium traces found at undeclared sites.

But at a board of governors meeting last week in Vienna, UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi said Pezeshkian agreed to meet to discuss improving co-operation. "I encourage Iran to facilitate such a meeting in the not-too-distant future so that we can establish a constructive dialogue that leads swiftly to real results," Grossi said in a statement.

When asked by reporters if the "not-too-distant future" meant after the U.S. election, Grossi responded: "No, hopefully before that."

Reviving the 2015 nuclear deal had been a priority for the Biden administration. Talks progressed enough that in 2022 the two sides were reviewing "final" texts of a potential agreement, but failed to secure a breakthrough. The deal had curbed Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief, but collapsed when then president Donald Trump withdrew in 2018 and imposed new "maximum pressure" sanctions on Iran.

Iran's president campaigned on promises to improve the economy by ending isolation. And as he built his cabinet, his appointments reflect a greater emphasis on diplomacy.

"He has all the right people in place," said Sina Azodi, an expert on Iran and a lecturer at George Washington University, of Pezeshkian's government formation. "The question is if he can get the approval of (Ali) Khamenei," Iran's supreme leader.

The Washington Post

OTTAWA

FEDS EXTEND BAN ON SENIOR IRANIAN OFFICIALS

OTTAWA The federal government is expanding a measure that bans tens of thousands of Iranian officials from entering Canada. The change, announced Sunday, means any senior official who

served in the Iranian government at any time since June 23, 2003, is now inadmissible to Canada. Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi was arrested on that date in Tehran,

and died in hospital almost three weeks later after being tortured and raped. Ottawa first labelled the Iranian government as a regime engaging in terrorism and systematic or gross human rights violations in November 2022, and denied entry to senior officials who'd served in the government since Nov. 15, 2019. Current and former officials present in Canada could be removed from the country. *The Canadian Press*



STEVE BOSCH / POSTMEDIA NEWS FILES

People attend a candlelight vigil in Vancouver for Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi in 2003. Kazemi had been arrested, raped and beaten to death in custody in Tehran, Iran.

Iranian women going without hijabs as death of Amini marked

RISKS REMAIN

JON GAMBRELL

DUBAI • On the streets of Iranian cities, it's becoming more common to see a woman passing by without a mandatory head scarf, or hijab, as the second anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini and the mass protests it sparked approaches.

There's no government official or study acknowledging the phenomenon, which began as Iran entered its hot summer months and power cuts in its overburdened electrical system became common. But across social media, videos of people filming neighbourhood streets or just talking about a normal day in their life, women and girls can be seen walking past with their long hair out over their shoulders, particularly after sunset.

This defiance comes despite what United Nations investigators describe as "expanded repressive measures and policies" by Iran's theocracy to punish them — though there's been no

recent catalyzing event like Amini's death to galvanize demonstrators.

The country's new reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian campaigned on a promise to halt the harassment of women by morality police. But the country's ultimate authority remains the 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who in the past said "unveiling is both religiously forbidden and politically forbidden."

For some observant Muslim women, the head covering is a sign of piety before God and modesty in front of men outside their families. In Iran, the hijab — and the all-encompassing black chador worn by some — has long been a political symbol as well.

"Meaningful institutional changes and accountability for gross human rights violations and crimes under international law, and crimes against humanity, remains elusive for victims and survivors, especially for women and children," warned a UN fact-finding mission on Iran on Friday.

Amini, 22, died on Sept. 16, 2022, in a hospital after her arrest by the country's

morality police over allegedly not wearing her hijab to the liking of the authorities. The protests that followed Amini's death started first with the chant, "Women, Life, Freedom." However, the protesters' cries soon grew into open calls for revolt against Khamenei.

A months-long security crackdown that followed killed more than 500 people and saw 22,000 detained.

Today, passersby on the streets of Tehran, whether its tony northern suburbs for the wealthy or the working-class neighbourhoods of the capital's southern reaches, now routinely see women without the hijab.

"My quasi-courage for not wearing scarves is a legacy of Mahsa Amini and we have to protect this as an achievement," said a 25-year-old student at Tehran Sharif University, who gave only her first name Azadeh out of fear of reprisal. "She could be at my current age if she did not pass away."

The disobedience still comes with risk. Months after the protests halted, Iranian morality police returned to the streets.

There have been scattered videos of women and young girls being roughed up by officers in the time since. In 2023, a teenage Iranian girl was injured in a mysterious incident on Tehran's Metro while not wearing a head scarf and later died in hospital.

The Associated Press



ATTA KENARE / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

People in Tehran, including a woman without the obligatory head scarf, walk on a market street on Sunday, the second anniversary of the death in custody of Mahsa Amini.

Houthi missile reaches central Israel

DAN WILLIAMS

A missile fired by Yemen's Houthis reached central Israel on Sunday, setting off sirens from Tel Aviv to the Jerusalem foothills and apparently breaking up in mid-air as several attempts were made to shoot it down, the Israeli military said.

The rebel group — whose long-range attacks on Israel in solidarity with the terrorist group Hamas's almost year-old war against it from Gaza have mostly been intercepted over the Red Sea — said the missile they used to penetrate the Tel Aviv outskirts was new and hypersonic.

It marked the deepest reach yet for a missile launched from Yemen — some 2,000 kilometres from Israel — by the Houthis, who in July managed to guide a drone into Tel Aviv, where it exploded, killing one man. Israel retaliated with a counterstrike on Yemen's Red Sea port of Hodeida the following day.

"The Houthis should already have been aware that we exact a heavy price for any attempt to attack us," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. "Anyone who needs a reminder is welcome to visit Hodeida."

The military said both the high-altitude Arrow interceptor and the short-range Iron Dome interceptor were repeatedly activated against Sunday's projectile and that their performance was still under review.

In March, Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies analyzed reports that the Houthis had developed hypersonic missiles. Such weapons, it said, would pose a challenge to the Israel Defense Forces due to their high speed and manoeuvrability.

Bloomberg News

UGANDA

MILITARY FUNERAL
FOR OLYMPIC ATHLETE
SLAIN BY PARTNER

Thousands of mourners in Uganda paid their respects Saturday to Rebecca Cheptegei, the Olympic athlete who died last week in Kenya after her partner set her on fire. Military officers played a prominent role in the funeral because Cheptegei, 33, held the rank of sergeant in Uganda's army, said military spokesman Brig. Felix Kulayigye, adding that she deserved a "gun salute that befits her rank." Athletes, family members and others delivered their eulogies before thousands in a sports field in the district of Bukwo. Many condemned domestic violence. "As a nation, we are indeed in a black and dark moment," said Ajilong B. Modestar, the Bukwo resident district commissioner. "We condemn in the strongest terms the manner in which Rebecca died. ... We should not continue battering women in this manner." *The Associated Press*



Torrential rains trigger
mass evacuations
in Central Europe

Rivers surge
as region sees
record flooding

KAREL JANICEK

PRAGUE • Another night of torrential rains pounding Central Europe forced massive evacuations in the hardest hit areas in the Czech Republic, where floods reached extreme levels on Sunday.

Meteorologists have warned the situation still might get worse as waters in most rivers are rising, the flood wave made its way through the country and more heavy rains could return overnight.

Authorities declared the highest flood warnings in almost 90 places across the country and in two north-eastern regions that recorded the biggest rainfall in recent days, including the Jeseníky mountains near the Polish border.

In the city of Opava, up to 10,000 people out of a population of around 56,000 have been asked to leave their homes for higher ground. Rescuers used boats to transport people to safety in a neighbourhood flooded by the raging Opava River.

"There's no reason to wait," Mayor Tomáš Navrátil told Czech public radio. He said that the situation was worse than during the last devastating floods in 1997, known as the "flood of the century."

"We have to focus on saving lives," Prime Minister Petr Fiala told Czech public television on Sunday. His government was to possibly meet Monday to assess the damages.

The worst "is not behind us yet," the prime minister warned.

AT LEAST 4 MISSING,
VILLAGES CUT OFF

Thousands of others also were evacuated in the towns of Krnov, which was almost completely flooded, and Cesky Tesin. The Oder River that flows to Poland was reaching extreme levels in the city of Ostrava and in Bohumin, prompting mass evacuations.

Ostrava, the regional capital is the third-largest Czech city. Its mayor, Jan Dohnal, said the city is facing major traffic disruptions in the days to come. Almost no trains were operating in the region.

Towns and villages in the Jeseníky mountains, including the local centre of Jeseník, were inundated and

isolated by raging waters that turned roads into rivers. The military sent a helicopter to help with evacuations.

Jeseník mayor Zdenka Blistanova told Czech public television that several houses in her and other nearby towns have been destroyed by the floods. A number of bridges and roads have been also badly damaged.

Four people who were swept away by waters were missing, police said.

About 260,000 households were without power Sunday morning in the entire country, while traffic was halted on many roads, including the major D1 highway.

FIREFIGHTER DIES
IN LOWER AUSTRIA

A firefighter died after "slipping on stairs" while pumping out a flooded basement in the town of Tulln, the head of the fire department of Lower Austria Dietmar Fahrfaellner told reporters on Sunday.

Authorities declared the entire state of Lower Austria a disaster zone, while emergency personnel have so far evacuated 1,100 houses there. "We are experiencing difficult and dramatic hours in Lower Austria. For many people in Lower Austria these will probably be the most difficult hours of their lives," said Johanna Mikl-Leitner, the governor of Lower Austria.

In Vienna, the Wien River overflowed its banks, flooding homes and forcing first evacuations of houses in the river's proximity.

ROMANIA REPORTS
ANOTHER VICTIM

Romanian authorities said Sunday that another person had died in the hard-hit eastern county of Galati after four were reported dead there a day before, following unprecedented rain.

DRAMATIC FLOODING
IN POLAND

In Poland, one person was presumed dead in floods in the southwest, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Sunday.

Tusk said the situation was "dramatic" around the town of Klodzko, with about 25,000 residents, located in a valley in the Sudetes mountains near the border with the Czech Republic.

In Glucholazy, rising waters overflowed a river embankment and flooded streets and houses. Mayor Pawel Szymkowicz said, "we are drowning," and appealed to residents to evacuate to high ground.

The Associated Press



SERGEI GAPON / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The flooded city centre in Glucholazy, southern Poland, is seen in this aerial photo taken Monday.

Man, 27, sentenced up to 120 years after
enrolling in high school to prey on teens

KIM BELLWARE

During the fall semester in 2022, a new student came to Lincoln Northwest High School in Lincoln, Neb., as a junior transfer student. By spring, he re-emerged across town at Lincoln Southeast — a school he had graduated from in 2015.

The student known by peers as 17-year-old "Zach Hess" was really Zachary Scheich, a 26-year-old man who for more than 50 school days passed himself off as a high-schooler to befriend, exploit and, in some cases, sexually assault more than a dozen girls, some as young as 13. With a slight build and

standing 5-foot-4, he fit in with the teenage students, police indicated.

Last week, Scheich was sentenced to 85 to 120 years in prison on charges of sexual assault, child enticement with electronic communication and generating sexually explicit images of children, capping a two-year saga of impersonation and sexual abuse.

Scheich, now 27, pleaded no contest in July as part of deal to reduce the number of felony counts against him from 15 to five.

Deputy Lancaster County Attorney Amber Schlote said that the harm to Scheich's victims is immeasurable and

that it has led them to miss school as well as suffer failing grades, anxiety, ridicule, shame and a deep mistrust of adults.

"It has undeniably altered their life's trajectories," Schlote said.

Court records state Scheich created false documents and an "elaborate backstory" to gain enrolment in the schools; the court records did not detail what backstory Scheich told administrators.

"This individual provided a birth certificate, a high-school transcript, immunization records and a physical from a clinic," Matt Larson, then associate superintendent

for educational services at Lincoln Public Schools, said at a news conference in 2023.

"Turns out, all those appear to be fraudulent. But those documents were provided — the same documents we'd require (of) any student to enrol."

Once enrolled, Scheich began contacting girls in his classes via text and social media platforms such as Snapchat where he would flirt, solicit sexual contact, and — in some cases — send them money and persuade them to send him sexually explicit photos of themselves, according to court records.

Scheich went so far as to meet the families of some of the teenage girls before several concerned parents reported him as suspicious, prompting an investigation.

The Washington Post

U.S.

RIVER OTTER
ATTACKS CHILD AT
SEATTLE MARINA



BREMERTON, WASH. A river otter attacked a child at a Seattle-area marina, dragging the youngster from a dock and into the water before the mother rescued her child, wildlife officials said.

The child was pulled underwater and resurfaced after a few moments during the encounter Thursday at 9:30 a.m. at the Bremerton Marina in Kitsap County, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife officers said in a press release.

The Associated Press

UKRAINE

SUPPORT FOR
LONG-RANGE
STRIKE GROWS



PRAGUE The head of NATO's military committee said Saturday that Ukraine has the solid legal and military right to strike deep inside Russia to gain combat advantage — reflecting the beliefs of a number of U.S. allies — even as the Biden administration balks at allowing Kyiv to do so using U.S.-made weapons.

"Every nation that is attacked has the right to defend itself. And that right doesn't stop at the border of your own nation," said Adm. Rob

Bauer, speaking at the committee's annual meeting

Bauer, of Netherlands, also added that nations have the sovereign right to put limits on the weapons they send to Ukraine. But, standing next to him at a press briefing, Lt. Gen. Karel Rehka, chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, made it clear his nation places no such weapons restrictions on Kyiv.

The Associated Press

HAITI

FUEL TRUCK
EXPLOSION KILLS
AT LEAST 15

PORT-AU-PRINCE A tanker truck carrying gasoline in Haiti on Saturday flipped and exploded, killing at least 15 people and seriously injuring 40 others, officials said.

Prime Minister Garry Conille provided the figures in an X post. Earlier, Radio Caribes reported that 17 people had been killed.

Haiti's hospitals are poorly equipped to treat victims of severe burns. The nation

of 12 million people has also been struggling with fuel shortages, as fighting between gangs makes it more difficult to import goods into the country.

Saturday's explosion happened in Miragoane, a city of 60,000 people that was hit by a strong earthquake three years ago.

In 2021, 75 people were killed in Haiti's second largest city Cap Haitien, when another fuel truck overturned and unleashed a fireball that swept through several homes and businesses that were built closely next to each other.

Some of those killed were onlookers who had rushed to the truck to try and scoop up fuel.

The Associated Press

MYANMAR

DEATH TOLL FROM
TYPHOON YAGI
REACHES 74



BANGKOK The death toll in Myanmar from flooding and landslides caused by Typhoon Yagi has reached at least 74, with 89 people missing, Myanmar's state television said Saturday.

Difficulties in compiling information have raised fears that the number of casualties may be higher.

The new official death toll announced by the country's military government was more than double the 33 re-

The Associated Press

NIGERIA

AT LEAST 40
DROWN AFTER
BOAT CAPSIZES



ABUJA, NIGERIA A boat carrying mostly farmers capsized on a river in northwest Nigeria, drowning at least 40 people, President Bola Tinubu said Sunday.

The accident happened in Zamfara state, as farmers were trying to get to their land, Tinubu said in a statement. Farmers use the crossing regularly to sell produce at the markets and locals say the boats often overloaded.

Yazid Abubakar, a police

spokesperson in Zamfara, told The Associated Press the accident happened Saturday and that five people were rescued, but 40 are still missing. It was not immediately clear how many people were on the boat when it went down.

Zamfara state is rampant with armed groups who kidnap for ransom, steal cattle and engage in illegal mining.

The Associated Press

IN A BINDER

PARENTS SEEK OUT SALES AS COST OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND OTHER STAPLES RISES. PAGE NP7



CANADA'S BUSINESS VOICE, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024



ETHAN CAIRNS / THE CANADIAN PRESS FILES

Unifor applied to certify an Amazon warehouse in Delta, B.C., above, and a confidential vote was held at the end of May. The results of that vote are sealed due to a complaint by Unifor, which alleges Amazon ramped up hiring to try to dilute union support.

LABOUR

UNIONIZATION AT AMAZON PROVING TO BE TOUGH SELL

Company resisting efforts by organized labour at Canadian warehouses

ROSA SABA

Unions trying to organize at Amazon.com Inc. workplaces across Canada are facing a series of hurdles, including legal challenges and alleged anti-union tactics from the e-commerce giant.

Labour laws in Canada are generally stronger than those south of the border, where unions also face an uphill battle, experts say.

But Adam King, an assistant professor in the labour studies department at the University of Manitoba, says that isn't enough to guarantee successful unionization efforts here.

"When you have an employer who's as committed to remaining union-free as Amazon is, even those relatively better labour laws are not sufficient."

Amazon has challenged multiple steps of the certification process at several warehouses in Canada. It has been accused by unions of employing tactics to prevent workers from organizing, such as workplace messages and hiring spies, which the company denies.

"Our employees have the right to choose to join a union or not to do so. They always have," Amazon spokeswoman Barbara Agrait said in a statement, responding to characterizations of Amazon as anti-union.

She added that Amazon doesn't think unions are the best option for its employees.

"We favour opportunities for each person to be respected and valued as an individual, and to have their unique voice heard by working directly with our team," Agrait said.

In Canada, just one Amazon warehouse is unionized — a location in Laval, Que., certified in May with the Confeder-

ation des syndicats nationaux (CSN).

The limited progress in Canada comes after a historic unionization in the U.S. in 2022, when workers in the New York borough of Staten Island certified with the Amazon Labor Union. Amazon's challenge of the unionization was rejected last week by the National Labor Relations Board.

That location is the only unionized Amazon warehouse in the U.S., and it doesn't have a contract yet.

Experts say Canada's labour laws prevent similar delays from happening here since most jurisdictions have what's known as first-contract arbitration, where parties can request arbitration for a first collective agreement.

Because of first-contract arbitration, in the Laval case Amazon is "basically facing a choice of negotiating an agreement or having one imposed on them," said Barry Eidlin, an associate professor of sociology at McGill University.

Negotiations for a first contract at the Laval warehouse are underway, but Amazon has challenged the unionization, arguing the process violated workers' freedom of association because a secret vote was not held.

In Quebec and British Columbia, workers can be automatically certified without a vote if a certain proportion of the workforce signs union cards, a law known as card-check certification. The Laval warehouse was certified through this process.

"The Quebec labour laws ... make a real difference," said Caroline Senneville, president of the CSN. She said card-check certification is one of several provisions that help strengthen a union's position leading up to certification and during the bargaining process.

Eidlin called Amazon's challenge of the Laval union certification "mind-blowing."

"They're basically saying that they know Canadian labour law better than the Canadian Supreme Court," he said.

The Laval location isn't the only one where the CSN is working to represent Amazon employees.

At a warehouse in the Montreal borough of Lachine, the province's labour tribunal recently ordered Amazon to cease interfering in union affairs and pay the union \$30,000, ruling it communicated anti-union messages to workers, though the tribunal also rejected a claim that the company had threatened and intimidated employees.

In the decision, the judge said many of the workers are immigrants with precarious status who may be unsure of labour laws, making them potentially susceptible to misunderstanding certain messages from their employer about unionization.

Agrait said Amazon strongly disagrees with "the limited finding that our factual communications with employees about the process were somehow improper," and said the company is challenging that part of the decision.

"We believe it's important to share facts and information with employees so they can make free and educated decisions about representation," she said.

The judge's characterization of the Amazon workforce is accurate, said Mostafa Henaway, an organizer with the Immigrant Workers Centre in Montreal who researches Amazon workers at Concordia University and who previously wrote about his own experience working at the Laval warehouse.

See AMAZON on NP7

“THEY’RE NOT JUST GOING OUT TO STORES AND MAKING THOSE IMPULSE BUYS. THEY’RE REALLY PUTTING A LOT MORE THOUGHT ... INTO WHAT THEY ARE PURCHASING AND WHAT THEY NEED.
— MICHELLE WASYLYSHEN, RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA

Workers may be afraid to ‘rock the boat’

AMAZON
Continued from NP6

Workers may be wary of unions because they don’t want to “rock the boat,” he said.

‘RUNNING OUT OF OPTIONS’

On the other side of the country, another union is embroiled in an unfair labour practice complaint against Amazon.

Unifor applied to certify an Amazon warehouse in Delta, B.C., and a confidential vote was held at the end of May.

The results of that vote are sealed due to Unifor’s complaint, which alleges Amazon ramped up hiring to try to dilute union support.

The union also alleges Amazon engaged in anti-union efforts similar to those addressed by Quebec’s labour tribunal, in particular anti-union messaging.

The company has denied the allegations.

Justin Gniposky, Unifor’s director of organizing, said Amazon initially sought to prevent the vote from going ahead, unsuccessfully.

The company then asked for the current complaint to be dismissed, also unsuccessfully, he said.

“They’re running out of options on this.”

Amazon’s Agrait said the company believes the decision to call a vote at the Delta warehouse “undermines the rights of the majority of our employees in Vancouver who chose not to sign cards.”

The alleged anti-union tactics described by Unifor and CSN are “straight out of the Amazon playbook,” said Eidlin.

“We’ve known for years that this is a viciously anti-union company, and they basically are going to try every trick in the book.”

FIRST CONTRACT COULD BE ‘LITMUS TEST’

Achieving a contract in Laval would show workers at other warehouses that “it can be done,” Senneville said, adding the main bar-

“WE’VE KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT THIS IS A VICIOUSLY ANTI-UNION COMPANY.”

gaining priorities are health and safety and pay.

Amazon offers competitive pay and benefits, Agrait says, and it provides comprehensive health and safety training and resources.

Experts say getting a first contract at the Laval warehouse could be a breakthrough for organizing efforts across the country.

“Quebec is going to be really a litmus test,” said Henaway.

But King believes unions will need to work together to have success on a wider scale.

“To really bring Amazon to the table might require a level of co-ordination that unions in North America are not necessarily accustomed to,” he said.

The Canadian Press, with files from The Associated Press



CRAIG ROBERTSON / POSTMEDIA NEWS FILES

A survey of 1,014 Canadians found 53 per cent of back-to-school shoppers would seek sales, 26 per cent would use coupons and 20 per cent would thrift.

RETAIL

Back-to-school shoppers hit by sticker shock

Parents still feel pinch despite easing inflation

TARA DESCHAMPS

TORONTO • When August rolled around, April Hicke realized the \$100 she typically gives her 13-year-old son to update his wardrobe in time for school to start was no longer enough.

“Even on the sale racks, a pair of sweatpants at SportChek, they’re still \$25 a pair. You used to be able to go and buy a pair of sweatpants for \$10,” said the Calgary-based mother of two. “I am shocked at the (price) increase of kids’ clothes.”

Hicke increased her son’s budget to \$200, taught him about looking for deals and used an annual Patagonia sale and resale sites like Poshmark to find savings on such big-ticket items as winter coats.

While it wasn’t the first time she has taken these steps to reduce her back-to-school shopping bill, the strategies she and other parents are using have a renewed importance this year, because even as inflation has eased, Canadians aren’t seeing any meaningful relief in their expenses.

The cost of staples like food has soared, leaving less spare cash for binders, books and new school looks.

Despite many having less or no wiggle room in their budgets, 85.7 per cent of the 8,977 Canadians surveyed on behalf of the Retail Council of Canada in July predicted they would spend as much — or more — on back to school than they did last year.

About 73 per cent of those respondents planned to

spend more than \$50 and about 43 per cent said they would exceed \$100.

An increasing number planned to shop early, too.

“They’re not just going out to stores and making those impulse buys. They’re really putting a lot more thought and mindfulness into what they are purchasing and what they need,” said Michelle Wasylyshen, a spokesperson for the council.

“What can they maybe get by without this year? What did they buy last year that can make it through another year?”

The survey found the top categories shoppers plan to spend on are school supplies, clothing, books and electronics.

For items kids can’t do without, parents said they were scouring flyers for deals, browsing clearance racks and turning to second-hand stores or social media groups.

A survey of 1,014 Canadians conducted on behalf of NerdWallet in July found 53 per cent of back-to-school shoppers would seek sales, 26 per cent would use coupons and 20 per cent planned to thrift. About 32 per cent said they would buy all new school supplies, but that

doesn’t mean saving wasn’t still a priority for them.

“Value is top of mind for our parent customers when they shop with us and more so in this year than ever before,” said Rania Hussein, Indigo Books & Music Inc.’s senior vice-president of print.

So far this back-to-school season, she has noticed a higher proportion of sales coming from books that are at “an accessible price point.”

Walmart Canada has seen a lot of demand this year for wireless headphones, laptops and printers.

Sally Chan, the retail giant’s director of strategic commercial planning, attributed some of the spike to the rise in online schooling that the COVID-19 pandemic brought, introducing many parents to a whole new level of education costs.

“It’s the demand for technology that’s really kind of stretching the parent’s budget a little bit more than in the past,” she said.

To reduce the hit to her wallet as much as possible, Alison Balfour planned to take a wait-and-see approach to back to school shopping.

Once classes begin for her two boys and they get a better sense of their needs and tastes, the Calgary mother said she would begin shopping. By then, she hopes prices will have come down from the “exponentially expensive” levels she has seen recently.

“I am not seeing a lot of savings, to be honest,” she said. “If we are seeing inflation go down and the economy is supposed to be recovering, why are we still seeing these costs, especially in grocery stores and things for school? Nothing seems to be going down.”

The Canadian Press



COLE BURSTON / THE CANADIAN PRESS FILES

For items kids can’t do without, parents said they were scouring flyers for deals and browsing clearance racks.

MORTGAGES

Variable rates beginning to regain traction as Bank of Canada cuts rates

CRAIG WONG

OTTAWA • The decision by the Bank of Canada to cut its key interest rate target this month was good news for borrowers with variable-rate mortgages, bringing back some of the shine for the once popular loans.

The rate cut prompted big commercial banks to lower their prime rates, which are used to set the rates charged for variable-rate mortgages.

Toma Sojonky, a mortgage broker at Verico Paragon Mortgage Group in West Vancouver, B.C., says variable-rate mortgages are beginning to regain some traction with clients after falling out of favour when the rate-hiking cycle began.

“I think there are folks who understand that the pendulum is swinging the other way,” he said.

Those with a variable-rate mortgage have had a wild ride since the pandemic.

When the Bank of Canada cut interest rates to nearly zero in the spring of 2020, those with variable-rate mortgages saw the rates charged on their loans fall too, helping fuel their popularity.

But the reverse was also true. When the central bank started rapidly raising rates in 2022 in an effort to bring inflation under control, those with variable-rate loans saw their costs march higher in lockstep. The increase in rates meant either higher payments or less principal being repaid on the loans.

Borrowers who saw the interest rates charged on their loans more than double saw their monthly payments increase by hundreds of dollars over the amortization period of their loans extended by years.

The popularity of variable-rate loans plunged.

But the economy has shifted once more and the central bank has cut interest rates

three times this year so far and suggested more cuts were coming.

In announcing the rate cut on Sept. 4, Bank of Canada governor Tiff Macklem said if inflation continues to ease broadly in line with the bank’s July forecast, it is reasonable to expect further cuts in the policy rate.

Julie Leduc, a mortgage broker at Mortgage Brokers Ottawa, said clients with variable-rate loans were not happy when rates were rising, but the cycle is turning.

“We’ve lived the worst of it, we’re on our way out,” she said. “So let’s look for the benefits and the benefit is, if they go variable and the rates go down, they’re going to live the benefit.”

Right now, the rates offered to those looking for a new variable-rate mortgage or needing to renew are higher than those being offered for five-year fixed rate mortgages, something that Leduc called an anomaly.

That’s because the expectations are that the Bank of Canada will continue to cut interest rates, lowering the amount charged to borrowers in the future. If something unexpected happens and the central bank doesn’t cut rates, then the rates charged on variable-rate mortgages won’t go down.

But if things continue to roll out as expected, those choosing variable-rate loans will see the amount they are charged go down. Just how much and how quickly will depend on the central bank.

Sojonky says the discounts lenders offer to the prime rate for variable-rate mortgages are also improving.

“Previously in the winter or last fall, we saw discounts to prime as low as 0.15 to 0.3, whereas now we are beginning to enjoy discounts to prime that are approaching one per cent again,” he said.

The Canadian Press

EAGLES NEED MORE FROM HURTS

Jalen Hurts is off the market. As a quarterback? For sure. For more than a year now after Hurts and the Philadelphia Eagles reached a deal in April 2023 for US\$179.3 million guaranteed through the 2028 season. But if Hurts, who just got engaged, and the Eagles want a look at real-deal Super Bowl bling, they can go ask Nick Foles, who led Philadelphia to its only Super Bowl win. The Eagles (1-0) will honour the retired Foles ahead of Monday night's



home opener against the Atlanta Falcons (0-1). Foles' career reached its height in the 2017 regular season and was the Super Bowl MVP after leading the Eagles to a 41-33 win over the New England Patriots. Hurts has been a bit of an enigma over his past eight starts (including playoffs), where the Eagles are just 2-6. The Eagles won last week but Hurts had two interceptions, a troubling trend.

The Associated Press



Goalie Walteri Ignatjew, seen in action on Thursday at WinSport, backstopped the Flames' prospects to a 3-1 win over the future Oilers at the annual Young Stars Classic tourney. GAVIN YOUNG

Goalie prospect takes chilling out to next level

Finnish puck stopper looks to make jump from second-tier Swedish league to AHL

WES GILBERTSON

Calgary Flames goaltending hopeful Walteri Ignatjew has some chill to him.

He proved that last season as a workhorse for Mora IK, earning the 'goaltender of the year award' in Sweden's second-tier Allsvenskan and raising eyebrows with this creative — and cold — approach to his recovery routine.

"We didn't have an ice bath at our rink in Sweden so me and one other Finnish guy, we needed to take matters into our own hands," said Ignatjew, who hails originally from Helsinki, with a wide grin. "There was, like, a small river beside the rink so we decided to cut a hole in the ice when it was frozen. We cut a hole and just dipped in and that was our ice bath the whole year."

"The Swedish guys were all laughing at us. They were like, 'Who the heck are these two stupid Finnish guys, just sitting in the river?' It's minus-20 outside, and we're just chilling in the river. But I loved it."

Who the heck is Walteri Ignatjew?

That's what Flames fans have been asking since mid-April, when the undrafted puck stopper joined the organization on a one-year, two-way contract.

The 24-year-old made his unofficial debut — and first career start on an NHL-sized rink — in Saturday's prospects-only edition of the Battle of Alberta, surrendering only one goal on 25 shots in backstopping his squad to a 3-1 victory over the Edmonton Oilers' up-and-comers at the Young Stars Classic in Penticton, B.C.

If Ignatjew had been successful on his attempt to score an empty-netter in the late stages, he would have immediately made a name for himself among hockey highlight watchers.

"It was a good rip," as his coach put it, but one of the Oilers managed to knock it out of the air in the neutral zone.

"We went through a little bit, in pre-game skate this morning, what the plays are when I go be-

hind the net," a beaming Ignatjew told reporters in Penticton after the game. "I was told to not pass the puck to the middle, but they didn't say anything about shooting, so ..."

A goalie goal would have been gravy, but Saturday's stingy performance was still an encouraging first step as Ignatjew adjusts to the speed and angles on the smaller sheet.

"It's a new world out there, so there are a lot of things I need to get used to," he told Postmedia. "As I like to say, I have to get more tools in my tool box. It comes down to working with the coaches, working with the staff to get the best out of myself this year. But for me, I just like to have the opportunity to prove myself here. I know it's a step higher. It's a better league than I played in last year, so I need to be better than last year. I need to pull it up from last year, keep the confidence up, and I think good things will come."

Indeed, it's a sizable jump from Allsvenskan to the AHL — Ignatjew is projected to open this season as Devin Cooley's backup with the Calgary Wranglers — but the staff at the Saddledome see plenty of potential in this new addition.

Listed at 6-foot-3 and 200 pounds, he brings a blend of size and athleticism.

"I think I read the game well," he said. "Even though I'm a big guy, I feel like I'm able to move quickly and beat the pass."

Ignatjew was, by far, the busiest backstop in Sweden's second division in 2023-24 and responded with a 26-18-0 record, a 2.34 goals-against average and .918 save percentage. His GAA was even lower in a dozen playoff outings.

As Flames director of goaltending Jordan Gigalet said after the signing was announced in the spring: "He just has an aura to him when he plays. There's this calm confidence to his game."

A little bit of chill, you could say. "I'm super grateful to get this chance to prove myself with the Flames," said Ignatjew, who idolized Tuukka Rask and Pekka Rinne as a kid and has, of course, heard the stories of Miikka Kiprusoff's heyday in Calgary. "The NHL is something I've been always dreaming about, since I start playing hockey. It's an unreal feeling to be here now."

"Of course, the NHL is still far away, so I guess it's still a dream. But I'm one step closer to make

that dream come true."

As a bonus, he won't have to step outside for a soak after practices and games this season.

On his first tour of the Saddledome, he was thrilled to spot an ice bath in the home locker-room.

"I don't have to go find a river," he quipped. "So that's good."

ICE CHIPS: The Flames will wrap the 2024 Young Stars Classic with today's matchup against the host Vancouver Canucks. Puck drop is set for 3:30 p.m. MT and the action will be livestreamed on the team website and broadcast on Sportsnet 960 The Fan ... Sam Morton has been Calgary's tournament standout so far, with two goals and an assist. Morton turned 25 over the summer, meaning he has a few years of experience on most of his foes, but it's still a good sign that this college free agent signing has been a force in Penticton ... Luke Misa, a fifth-round pick in the 2024 NHL Draft, put up two points against the Oilers. The 18-year-old Misa notched a hat-trick in July at the Flames' development camp scrimmage, so the undersized forward is really showing a knack for putting his name on the score-sheet.

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Dvalishvili upsets O'Malley at UFC 306

MARK ANDERSON

LAS VEGAS The Sphere is Las Vegas's transformational newest masterpiece, and the venue stole the show Saturday with a record-setting night for the UFC.

Merab Dvalishvili tried to do his part at UFC 306, putting on a convincing — though not aesthetically pleasing — performance in capturing the bantamweight championship with a unanimous decision over Sean O'Malley.

The judges scored it 49-46, 48-47 and 48-47 in favour of Dvalishvili (18-4), a 33-year-old from the country of Georgia. He used

a ground-and-pound attack to control most of the action against O'Malley (18-2).

"Now look at me," Dvalishvili said. "I'm a UFC champion and I'm living my dream."

"I inspire so many people in my country and around the world."

O'Malley, 29, who lives in Phoenix, was a slight -125 favourite at BetMGM Sportsbook.

The mild upset occurred before an announced sellout crowd of 16,024, attracting a US\$22 million gate that UFC president Dana White said was the highest grossing in the organization's history and for the nearly one-year-old

Sphere.

"Literally, the whole thing was seamless," White said. "It was perfect. We didn't have a lot of time to rehearse, but the team absolutely nailed it."

Valentina Shevchenko reclaimed the women's flyweight championship with all three judges awarding her a 50-45 victory over Alexa Grasso in the co-main event.

This was the third consecutive meeting between the two after Grasso took Shevchenko's belt in the first match. The second was a draw.

The third one wasn't closer, with the 36-year-old Shevchenko (24-



Merab Dvalishvili

4-1) using a ground-and-pound strategy to win all three rounds over 31-year-old Grasso (16-4-1) on the judges' cards.

"It's so huge," said Shevchenko, who is from Kyrgyzstan. "It is like a dream come true fighting in the Sphere."

This show at the Sphere was unlike any show in the UFC's

history, taking full advantage of the 160,000-square-foot (14,864-square-metre) high-definition LED screen to create an outer-space type feel as the pay-per-view portion of the card was about to begin.

White called this card his "love letter to Mexico," with mini stories of the neighbouring country's history and culture being told on the screen throughout the evening. Seven Mexican fighters, including Grasso, populated the card, and chants from the crowd of "Mexico!" broke out several times.

White has said this is a one-and-done, given the overwhelming undertaking to put together the show as well as the roughly US\$20 million cost.

The Associated Press



Stampeders running back Dedrick Mills dives over Alouettes defender Arthur Hamlin during Saturday night's 19-19 tie at McMahon Stadium. Mills was Calgary's offensive star, rambling for 122 yards on 21 carries. *DARREN MAKOWICHUK*

Blunders sabotage Stamps again

Upset of Alouettes there for the taking, but struggling team settles for rare tie

TODD SÆLHOF

It's a head scratcher for the Calgary Stampeders.

The result itself, combined with the continued blunders that, one more time, kept them from winning on Saturday night at McMahon Stadium.

It was a tie that should have been a win.

But it was a tie that felt exactly like the kind of losses that are piling up for this struggling CFL team.

"We need a win. We need to win," said Stampeders GM/head coach Dave Dickenson, moments after a crazy strange 19-19 draw with the defending Grey Cup champion Montreal Alouettes in front of 20,187 bewildered fans. "It's very difficult to feel great about a tie."

"Obviously, we haven't had a win in a while, so it's tough for our guys to feel good about that."

Especially since they allowed a win to slip through their hands after already having lost four straight.

Indeed, in what's become far too common a problem for the Stamps, they botched a big chance to upset the 10-2 Alouettes with mistake after mistake.

YOU NAME IT ...

It happened in the face of victory.

Dropped balls on key passes in the double-overtime sessions.

A timely turnover — a rare Tommy Stevens fumble — at the Alouettes two-yard line to keep the Stamps from going up 17-7 in the second quarter.

Even ultra-rare missed field goals, two of them from robo-kicker René Paredes in the fourth quarter, including one that doinked off the upright and fell straight down to the ground.

And the real killers were back-to-back major penalties on what should have been the winning drive for the Stamps.

"It looked to me like we were in control late, and we took some very, very costly penalties," said Dickenson of a face mask by rook-

ie Christy Nkanu followed on the next play by an unnecessary roughness call against fellow offensive lineman D'Antne Demery that pushed the Stamps from the Alouettes 16-yard line all the way back to the 45-yard line.

"It's all the things you don't see from championship teams," said veteran Stampeders linebacker Micah Awe. "You don't get dumb penalties, you do your job at crucial moments. ..."

"Because when it comes down to it, if you want to be in a championship game, you have to do your job and you have to not get penalties at those times. Otherwise, you won't be in that game, and that's kind of what we showed here. We haven't learned from it."

"If you're playing a championship calibre team, which is what Montreal is, you can't give them penalties. You can't give them free yards."

Truth be told, Calgary's defence didn't allow the Grey Cup champs a whole lot of yards on the evening.

It was an immensely strong game in that vein, with the Stampeders defence allowing just 292 yards and playing bend-but-don't-break football.

On the other side, quarterback

Jake Maier returned after being benched last game to go 29-of-37 for 236 yards and an early touchdown strike to Marken Michel covering 18 yards. Most noticeable about Maier's effort was that he didn't turn the ball over.

He hooked up with Michel six times for 73 yards, with Reggie Begelton — who was stellar in the second half — making seven grabs for 68 yards, Cam Echols caught five passes for 41 yards.

Meanwhile, on the ground, Stamps running back Dedrick Mills was the offensive star with 21 carries for 122 yards.

But it just wasn't enough to get the win.

TOO MANY MISSED

OPPORTUNITIES ... AGAIN.

"The film won't lie. There were multiple plays that, if we make them, we win," Dickenson said.

"We also might have caught some breaks here or there, too," Dickenson added in reference to a blocked Cody Grace punt that was returned for a scoop-six by the Alouettes but was called back on a roughing the kicker penalty, and an end of half fumble that fell five yards short of pay dirt for the visitors when Peyton Logan

tracked down would-be scorer Mustafa Johnson.

"And there are other plays that certainly went against us, too."

Indeed, there was plenty of stupid luck keeping them from the upset.

A Paredes kick bounced off the left upright from 51 yards away with 10:53 remaining, for one. Then his subsequent attempt, from 52 yards out with 95 seconds left, missed to the right.

And on the next march, the Alouettes erred on a run call with just seconds left that saw ball carrier Walter Fletcher fortuitously trip and fall to the ground to stop the clock with just one click left, allowing for Alouettes kicker José Maltos to connect for the tying field goal from 42 yards out.

"A lot of bad plays and adversity went against us," Dickenson said. "And I didn't feel like anybody let up."

"But we have to learn how to win. We have to learn as a club and as an organization how to win. It's hard to have a moral victory with a tie. I think we can play with anybody, though. I know we can. But can we do it consistently? And can we win a game first?"

"We have to win multiple games in a row, and that has yet to be accomplished this year."

BIG FINISH NEEDED TO EARN PLAYOFF SPOT

The one point from Saturday certainly is valuable in that it keeps them just two back of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, who hold down the final playoff spot in the CFL West Division.

The Stamps (4-8-1) play the Riders (5-7-1) twice in the final five games of the regular schedule, including Friday at McMahon (7:30 p.m., TSN, QR Calgary).

"I will say, 'We didn't lose (Saturday), so that's a step in the right direction,'" said Awe. "But ... man ... we keep kind of doing the same thing over and over."

"At the end of the day, this is a good test if we can learn from it. But we've been learning this whole season. It's time for us to start putting some wins in the win column."

SHORT YARDAGE

OL Bryce Bell (calf) was once again a late scratch from the Stampeders' active roster. ... Legendary Stampeders Marvin Coleman and Vince Goldsmith were honoured Saturday during the CFL Hall of Fame Game in Hamilton. Coleman, a solid defensive back and dangerous kick returner, enjoyed a career that spanned 10 seasons (1994-2003) including 166 games with the Stampeders and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. He earned nine divisional all-star nods, three CFL all-star selections, two Most Outstanding Player nominations and was a rookie-of-the-year candidate for the Stampeders. Goldsmith, a linebacker, entered the CFL in 1981 and notched 17 sacks to earn the most outstanding rookie award and be saluted as a CFL all-star, his first of three division nods over a 10-season career (1981-90). The two stars join receivers Chad Owens, S.J. Green and Weston Dressler, builders Ray Jauch and Ed Laverty and Football Reporters of Canada personalities Farhan Lalji and Steve Daniel in the Canadian Football League's Class of 2024.

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Piastri prevails in dramatic finish at 'stressful' F1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN Battles for the lead, a dramatic late crash, a championship contender's comeback.

Oscar Piastri won an instant Formula One classic that had it all at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Sunday.

Sergio Perez and Carlos Sainz Jr. collided while fighting for podium places and title challenger Lando Norris battled his way from 15th on the grid to finish fourth — crucially ahead of standings leader Max Verstappen.

McLaren's Piastri started second behind Leclerc but took the lead with a daring swoop past the Ferrari driver into the first corner on lap 20 of 51.

Red Bull's Sergio Perez tried to attack Leclerc for second late on but ended up colliding with the second Ferrari of Carlos Sainz Jr., who was close behind.

George Russell ended up third for Mercedes as the race finished under speed restrictions. "That

was probably the most stressful afternoon of my life," Piastri, who took his second career win, told his team over the radio just after the race.

Norris was following close behind Sainz and Perez when they crashed and recounted the experience of driving into flying debris.

"Driving full gas into a into a wall of carbon fibre on the penultimate lap, I mean, that was pretty crazy," he said. "You couldn't see anything."

Canada's Lance Stroll of Montreal placed 19th for Aston Martin and did not finish.

Leclerc has started on pole for the last four races in a row in Azerbaijan but hasn't won any of them. "Not, obviously, another great day for the team," was how he summed up Ferrari's race.

Norris limited the damage to his championship chances of a poor starting position with quick early overtakes and smart strategy, be-

fore Perez and Sainz's crash lifted him further up.

Norris may have started the race in defensive mode but instead ended up taking a further three points out of Verstappen's lead, which still stands at a formidable 59 points with seven rounds of the championship remaining.

In a season when McLaren has challenged for the title despite strategy calls that have sometimes seemed confusing or counterproductive, converting second and 15th on the grid into first and fourth at the flag was a triumph.

A long first stint on hard tires meant Norris was able to first slow down Perez to help out Piastri, and fight Verstappen too.

Verstappen, who had stopped for tires, was left stuck behind Norris lap after lap and was eventually caught and passed for sixth by Russell. Norris stopped for fresh tires and hunted down Verstappen's now off-the-pace car in the



Oscar Piastri of Australia posted his second career victory Sunday at the F1 Grand Prix of Azerbaijan at Baku City Circuit. *GETTY IMAGES*

final laps before completing a pass that could play an outsized role in the title race.

Fernando Alonso was sixth for Aston Martin, while Alexander Albon took seventh for Williams.

Albon's rookie teammate Franco Colapinto took eighth in only his second race in F1, becoming the first Argentine driver to score points since Carlos Reutemann in 1982.

The driver he replaced at Wil-

liams last month, American Logan Sargeant, hadn't scored a point this season.

Lewis Hamilton was ninth after starting the race from the pit lane due to changing car parts, and 19-year-old Oliver Bearman — also in his second career F1 race — was 10th as a stand-in at Haas for the suspended Kevin Magnussen, beating his far more experienced teammate Nico Hulkenberg.

The Associated Press



The Kansas City Royals locked up shortstop Bobby Witt Jr. by signing him to an 11-year, US\$288-million contract extension just before spring training. GENE J. PUSKAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROYAL RESURGENCE

Kansas City is vying for a playoff spot in one of the biggest turnarounds in MLB history

CHELSEA JANES

WASHINGTON The Kansas City Royals lost 106 games last year. They finished last, by a five-game margin, in Major League Baseball's weakest division.

Their bright young star, Bobby Witt Jr., seemed doomed to a Mike Trout-ian fate. Their beloved-but-aging franchise anchor, Salvador Perez, seemed likely to slide quietly into the twilight. World Series heroics of a decade ago felt like an ancient, impossible dream.

Now, the Royals are making a charge for the post-season, just three games back of the American League Central-leading Cleveland Guardians, engineering one of the most substantial turnarounds in modern baseball history. They won just 56 games last year. They have won 82 this year entering Sunday, a 25-games-and-counting jump that was on pace to challenge the 1998-99 Arizona Diamondbacks (plus-35) until an early September slump.

Their turnaround is a reminder that in this age of expanded playoffs, when six teams in each league qualify and a handful more come close, contending is never as far

away as it feels. To the extent that the Royals offer a blueprint for perennial losers hoping for better, the outline is simple: Try.

The Royals entered last off-season with a core of young players, centred around Witt and starter Cole Ragans, and a starting rotation that ranked among the sport's worst in 2023. General manager J.J. Picollo opened the off-season by making the declaration that owner John Sherman would give him roughly US\$30 million to spend — less than it would take to pay a superstar annually, but a significant amount of money for the Royals.

Picollo spent it on a pair of veteran starters, Seth Lugo and Michael Wacha, as well as versatile reliever Chris Stratton. The Royals also signed veteran reliever Will Smith, a member of the past three World Series champions.

Kansas City's spending concluded with a moderate outfield upgrade in Hunter Renfroe and a veteran utility man in Adam Frazier. For the relatively low cost of \$47 million — only about a \$20 million net jump from their 2023 payroll — the Royals turned themselves from hopeless to hopeful.

That spending seemed to pay

off just before the start of spring training, when the Royals did something else that signalled, well, effort: They signed Witt to an 11-year contract extension worth US\$288 million, with a team option for three more years that would push the deal to \$377 million over 14 seasons. The deal, by far the biggest in Royals history, was the second-largest given to a player yet to hit arbitration after the \$340 million the San Diego Padres gave Fernando Tatis Jr. in 2021. That deal, marred in part by Tatis's suspension for violating MLB's performance-enhancing drug policy and his inability to stay healthy, serves as a reminder that such deals involve significant risk.

But in the Royals' case, the Witt deal also offered huge rewards. The first was eliminating any speculation about whether he might find bigger markets appealing if he reached free agency. The second was relative cost certainty around their homegrown superstar for the remainder of his career, a crucial benefit given Witt would have become arbitration eligible after the 2024 season. With a .333 batting average and a second 30 home-run, 30 stolen-base season in reach, Witt looks like a worthy challeng-

er to Aaron Judge for American League MVP. He certainly would have been due a massive raise.

Sherman's spending and the Witt deal also made a compelling case to local officials and voters that the Royals deserved their support for a new stadium. Certainly Sherman's willingness to spend was motivated, in part, by wanting to make that case. And not every team will be willing or able to add so much payroll so quickly.

Still, the Royals are not the only team — particularly in the weaker Central divisions — undermining the notion, peddled by some owners, that small-market teams are simply out of luck as salaries continue to rise. Some laughed, for example, when the Milwaukee Brewers signed veteran first baseman Rhys Hoskins this winter after losing their manager to the Chicago Cubs and trading ace Corbin Burnes to the Baltimore Orioles. Why spend on a veteran slugger for a sinking ship?

Well, Hoskins is second on the Brewers with 24 homers, anchoring a lineup that has benefited from a 30-homer explosion from shortstop Willy Adames and a breakout from catcher William Contreras.

Like the Royals, the Brewers locked up their young star, 20-year-old Jackson Chourio, on a long-term deal. Like the Royals, they are assembling enough talent around him to exceed expectations. Despite spending \$115 million less on their roster than the Chicago Cubs and \$60 million less than the St. Louis Cardinals, the Brewers ran away from both of them in the standings.

The Guardians (23rd in payroll) continue to be a model of succeeding on a budget, leading the AL Central from pole to pole despite the breakdown of the pitching staff on which they normally rely.

Certainly, fate plays a role in turnarounds such as the Royals' this year. They stayed relatively healthy, for one thing.

And the fact remains that while the Royals and others prove making the playoffs does not require soaring payrolls, winning in October still seems to do so. In fact, since 2011, only two teams with payrolls outside MLB's top 10 have won the World Series. One was the 2017 Houston Astros, a team since tainted by a cheating scandal. The other?

Yup. The 2015 Royals.

The Washington Post

‘We’re not going to forget about Johnny’

Blue Jackets GM Waddell puts focus on hockey following Gaudreau's death

JOHN WAWROW

BUFFALO, N.Y. Hearing the familiar sounds of clacking sticks and pucks banging off the boards and glass while watching Columbus Blue Jackets prospects from the stands of a cold rink on a warm late-summer afternoon was not enough to wash away the lingering residuals of grief for Don Waddell.

That, the Blue Jackets general manager acknowledged, will take more time than anyone can guess — weeks, months, perhaps an entire season and beyond.

What mattered is how spending the weekend attending the Sabres Prospects Challenge represented a start to what Waddell called among the first steps in refocusing on hockey and the future in the aftermath of Columbus star Johnny Gaudreau and his brother Matthew's deaths when struck by a suspected drunken driver while riding bicycles on Aug 29.

"We got to play hockey," Waddell said. "We're not going to forget about Johnny and his family."

He then reflected on the speech Johnny Gaudreau's wife, Meredith, made during the brothers' fu-

neral on Monday, by urging those in mourning to move forward as she will in focusing on raising her children.

"Everybody knows that Johnny wants them to play hockey," Waddell said. "And everybody's rallying around that."

The resumption of hockey in Columbus began last week, when most Blue Jackets players returned to their facility to be together and lean on each other at the urging of Waddell and team captain Boone Jenner. And it will continue on Thursday, when the team opens training camp, exactly three weeks since the Gaudreaus were killed.

"Tragic. Senseless. But now we got to focus on trying to get our team ready to play hockey this year," Waddell said. "We all mourn and heal differently, but I think as a team being together like that is going to be critical for them to get moving forward."

Tragedy is no stranger to Waddell or the Blue Jackets.

Waddell was general manager of the then-Atlanta Thrashers in 2003 when Dany Heatley lost control of his car and struck a wall, with the crash killing passenger



Johnny Gaudreau's death remains on the minds of the Blue Jackets as the team starts the pre-season with rookie camp. AP PHOTO/FILES

and teammate Dan Snyder. In 2021, Blue Jackets goalie Matiss Kivlenieks died during a July Fourth fireworks accident.

Waddell placed the emphasis on himself and coach Dean Evason — both newcomers to Columbus this off-season — to guide the team through what will be an emotional season.

"Now, do I think there's going to be some dark days? I won't be surprised," Waddell said.

Reminders of the Gaudreaus' deaths remain apparent and were reflected in Buffalo on Friday night.

A moment of silence was held in tribute to the brothers before the opening faceoff of a game between the Blue Jackets and Sabres.

Afterward, Columbus prospect Gavin Brindley recalled the times he spent with Johnny Gaudreau in Columbus and as teammates representing the United States at the world hockey championship in the Czech Republic in May.

"He was one of the biggest mentors for me at the world championship," Brindley said. "I couldn't tell you how many times we hung out with Meredith, pictures on my

phone. It's just so hard to look back and see that kind of stuff."

The NHL and NHL Players' Association are providing the Blue Jackets help in the form of grief counselling, crowd security at vigils and addressing hockey issues, such as potentially altering the league's salary cap rules to provide Columbus relief from having to reach the NHL minimum payroll because of the void left by Gaudreau's contract.

"The Blue Jackets, I don't think anybody's focused from an organizational standpoint, from a hockey standpoint as to what comes next, because I think everybody's still in shock," NHL commissioner Gary Bettman told The Associated Press last week. "I don't think anybody's focused right now other than on the grieving part."

Much of the burden has fallen to Waddell, who has been in discussions with the NHL, the NHLPA and dealing with outreach programs with the Blue Jackets partner OhioHealth, while also overseeing preparations for training camp and gauging his prospects in Buffalo.

Tiring and emotional as it's been, Waddell found comfort being in his element — a rink — and looking ahead to the start of training camp.

"The guys are in really good shape. We've done a lot of testing already and they're eager to get going," Waddell said. "We have a reason to play for. And we'll make the best of it."

The Associated Press



MIKE EGERTON/PA VIA AP

BIG STEP FORWARD Canada’s Felix Auger-Aliassime reaches to make a shot during his win over Jack Draper on Sunday in Manchester, England, clinching a tie with Britain in Davis Cup play. Unbeaten Canada now advances to the knockout stage this November in Spain.

SIR CHARLES ‘SADDENED’ BY SIMPSON’S DEPARTURE

Basketball legend expresses shock after Sportsnet shows longtime friend the door



STEVE SIMMONS

TORONTO I didn’t expect Charles Barkley to call back. He doesn’t know me. But he knows Christine Simpson. And he returned my phone message because he cares about his good friend. Simpson was let go by Sportsnet the other day in a move announced first by her and later confirmed by the network. On the phone Friday, Barkley admitted in rather quiet and unlikely tones he was shocked and saddened to learn that Simpson, the longtime hockey broadcaster and sister of two former NHL players, was shown the door by Sportsnet. “I’m disappointed,” said Barkley, the voice of basketball in America and maybe all over the world. “I’m disappointed for my friend. She’s a tremendous talent and a just a wonderful person and a great friend.” Barkley first met Simpson in Las Vegas more than 20 years ago when she was on a trip with Wayne Gretzky. The two, Barkley and Simpson, along with Canadian broadcaster Rod Black,

became very close friends over the years. Almost every time Barkley mentions Canada on television, he somehow references both Simpson and Black. “I don’t know the circumstances of what happened,” said Barkley of Simpson’s departure from Sportsnet, where she has been prominent in hockey coverage — and in particular one-on-one interviews — for the past 26 years. “I think she has to be in shock. “But I do know this. To have a Canadian woman talking about hockey with her connections has to be a bonus for any network. Any network would be wise to hire her.” When it was suggested to Barkley that ageism might have been a factor in the parting because it has happened at other networks with other broadcasters, in and out of sports, he wasn’t sure how to respond. Simpson turns 60 next month. “I can’t answer that question personally because I don’t know,” the usually outspoken Barkley said. “I don’t talk about (stuff) I don’t know about. All I can tell you is I’m surprised and disappointed for her and for those watching.” Simpson is the latest in a long line of well known broadcasters let go by Sportsnet over the years. The list includes Don Cherry, Glenn Healy, George

Stroubouloupoulos, Doug MacLean, Scott Morrison, Damien Cox, Bob McCown and most recently, Jeff Marek.

AROUND THE BLUE JAYS I want to believe Bowden Francis is real. I really do. But he’s 28 years old and he’s been kicking around the minors for a decade. And he’s now flirting with no-hitters and is pitcher of the month, and I hope, for Blue Jays fans, he’s a late developer who has suddenly found his way. A scout I know says his stuff “is good but not great. Back of rotation stuff.” A Jays rotation that would start next season with Jose Berrios, Kevin Gausman, Francis, Chris Bassitt and Yariel Rodriguez might be the deepest in the American League East. My bet is that maybe one of Spencer Horwitz, Ernie Clement, Davis Schneider, Addison Barger, Leo Jimenez, Will Wagner, Joey Loperfido or Nathan Lukes will be in the Jays’ starting lineup next season. That’s a lot of bodies, just not a lot of sure thing, top prospects. The Blue Jays are a playoff team when Berrios is on the mound, hard as that might be to believe. The team is 20-9 in his 29 starts this season. When Berrios or Gausman don’t start, the Jays are 34-56. That’s .620 baseball when Berrios and Gausman start and .377 baseball when they don’t. Chad Green had an earned-run average of 1.98 in July and 1.59 in August. His ERA this month is 22.86. Would you say the Jays

miss closer Jordan Romano? Entering Sunday, in batting order, the top five hitters on the Jays have combined for 96 home runs. Aaron Judge and Juan Soto, hitting in the 2-3 spots in New York, have 93. The Jays’ George Springer is the fifth highest paid outfielder in the American League behind Stanton and Soto. Statistically he ranks somewhere between the 43rd and 53rd best hitter in the league. That’s not exactly value for your dollar. Ex-Jay Yusei Kikuchi has started eight games since being traded to Houston. The first place Astros are 8-0 in those outings.

AROUND THE DIAMONDS Luis Arraez is about to win his third straight batting title, with three different teams. That’s never been done before. Arraez’s career batting average is .324 at a time when hardly anyone hits .300 anymore. His batting average numbers after seven seasons are equal to those of Joe DiMaggio. ... I’m loving the Shohei Ohtani chase for 50 home runs and 50 stolen bases in the same season, and in my mind, I’m cheering for him. We have to remember we’re watching an extraordinary athlete in real time.

AND IN THE CFL I wish the Canadian Football League, and by extension the Canadian Football Hall of Fame, had more money to do its Hall of Fame weekend up right with greater pomp and circumstances. The inducted players deserve more and the fans deserve more. ... This has been a great year of CFL football with one twist: There’s not a single candidate of consequence for the Most Outstanding Player Award. ssimmons@postmedia.com [Twitter.com/simmonssteve](https://twitter.com/simmonssteve)

NOTEBOOK

U.S. wins Solheim Cup after tense final day

Lilia Vu made a two-foot birdie putt on the final hole as the United States won the Solheim Cup for the first time since 2017, beating Europe on a tense Sunday of singles matches at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in Gainesville, Va. Megan Khang, Rose Zhang and Allisen Corpuz moved the U.S. to the brink of victory with blowout wins, and the Americans got just enough from the back half of their lineup to prevent Europe from capturing the cup for a record fourth straight time. The Americans prevailed by a 15½-12½ margin.

Rasmus Hojgaard birdied his last three holes on Sunday for a 6-under 65 to win the Irish Open and hand Rory McIlroy another dose of disappointment before a raucous gallery at Royal County Down in Newscastle, Northern Ireland. McIlroy held a two-shot lead on the back nine until Hojgaard put together a stunning charge down the stretch to win for the fifth time on the European tour and deny McIlroy a victory in his home country. “Unfortunately, I’m getting used to it this year,” McIlroy said. “Hopefully, the tide is going to turn pretty soon, and I can turn all these close calls into victories.” McIlroy had a pair of bogeys on the closing four holes that allowed Hojgaard, playing two groups in front of him, to charge to victory in stunning fashion. Hojgaard, who started the final round three shots behind McIlroy, finished at 9-under 275.

Arsenal left archrival Tottenham’s stadium with a win for the third season in a row after Gabriel Magalhaes’ second-half header settled a feisty and physical north London derby in Premier League action on Sunday. Tottenham had Arsenal pegged back for much of the game but couldn’t make its chances count. The visitors weathered the pressure before Gabriel secured a 1-0 win by scoring in the 64th minute. The Brazilian centre back converted a corner from Bukayo Saka with a thumping header from the middle of the box. The goal secured a vital victory for Arsenal, who trail defending champion Manchester City by two points ahead of a trip to the Etihad Stadium next weekend.

Super middleweight champion Saul “Canelo” Alvarez outpointed challenger Edgar Berlanga on Saturday night in front of a sold-out crowd at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. Making his eighth super middleweight title defence, the 34-year-old Alvarez (61-2-2) dominated much of the fight, using his experience and tenacious pursuit to wear down the 27-year-old challenger.

Berlanga lost for the first time in his career, dropping to 22-1-0. Alvarez, a four-division champion, still hasn’t ended a fight early since scoring a technical knockout of Caleb Plant nearly three years ago, when he became the undisputed champion. *The Associated Press*

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East	W	L	Pct	GB	Central	W	L	Pct	GB	West	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	87	63	.580	—	Cleveland	86	64	.573	—	Houston	81	68	.544	—
Baltimore	84	66	.560	3	Kansas City	82	68	.547	4	Seattle	77	73	.513	4.5
Boston	75	75	.500	12	Minnesota	79	70	.530	6.5	Texas	71	79	.473	10.5
Tampa Bay	73	77	.487	14	Detroit	77	73	.513	9	Oakland	65	85	.433	16.5
Toronto	72	78	.480	15	Chicago	35	115	.233	51	Los Angeles	60	89	.403	21

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East	W	L	Pct	GB	Central	W	L	Pct	GB	West	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	90	59	.604	—	Milwaukee	86	63	.577	—	Los Angeles	88	61	.591	—
Atlanta	81	68	.544	9	Chicago	76	73	.510	10	San Diego	85	65	.567	3.5
New York	81	68	.544	9	St. Louis	74	75	.497	12	Arizona	83	66	.557	5
Washington	68	81	.456	22	Cincinnati	73	78	.483	14	San Francisco	72	78	.480	16.5
Miami	55	95	.367	35.5	Pittsburgh	71	78	.477	15	Colorado	57	93	.380	31.5

CFL

East	G	W	L	T	F	A	P
x-Montreal	13	10	2	1	351	288	21
Ottawa	13	8	4	1	335	347	17
Toronto	13	7	6	0	364	342	14
Hamilton	13	4	9	0	347	409	8

West	G	W	L	T	F	A	P
Winnipeg	13	7	6	0	295	274	14
British Columbia	14	7	7	0	352	350	14
Saskatchewan	13	5	7	1	333	330	11
Edmonton	13	5	8	0	385	342	10
Calgary	13	4	8	1	301	381	9

x—clinched playoff berth

Week 15
Saturday’s results
Hamilton 37 Ottawa 21
Montreal 19 Calgary 19 (OT)
Friday’s result
Toronto 33 British Columbia 17
Week 16
Bye: British Columbia
Friday, Sept. 20
Hamilton at Toronto, 5 p.m.
Saskatchewan at Calgary, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 21
Montreal at Ottawa, 1 p.m.
Winnipeg at Edmonton, 5 p.m.

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	North	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	2	0	0	1.000	65	38	Pittsburgh	2	0	0	1.000	31	16
Miami	1	1	0	.500	30	48	Cleveland	1	1	0	.500	35	46
N.Y. Jets	1	1	0	.500	43	49	Baltimore	0	2	0	.000	43	53
New England	1	1	0	.500	36	33	Cincinnati	0	2	0	.000	35	42
South	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	West	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	1	0	0	1.000	29	27	Kansas City	2	0	0	1.000	53	45
Indianapolis	0	2	0	.000	37	45	L.A. Chargers	2	0	0	1.000	48	13
Jacksonville	0	2	0	.000	30	38	Las Vegas	1	1	0	.500	36	45
Tennessee	0	2	0	.000	34	48	Denver	0	2	0	.000	26	39

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	North	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	1	0	0	1.000	34	29	Chicago	1	0	0	1.000	24	17
Dallas	1	1	0	.500	52	61	Minnesota	2	0	0	1.000	51	23
Washington	1	1	0	.500	41	55	Detroit	1	1	0	.500	42	40
N.Y. Giants	0	2	0	.000	24	49	Green Bay	1	1	0	.500	45	44
South	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	West	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New Orleans	2	0	0	1.000	91	29	Seattle	2	0	0	1.000	49	40
Tampa Bay	2	0	0	1.000	57	36	Arizona	1	1	0	.500	69	44
Atlanta	0	1	0	.000	10	18	San Francisco	1	1	0	.500	49	42
Carolina	0	2	0	.000	13	73	L.A. Rams	0	2	0	.000	30	67

YOU

A TROVE OF MEDICAL HISTORY

Intrigued by the 1918 influenza epidemic or the connections between Harry Potter and some of medical science's eminent scholars? You're in luck. Both are covered in the U.S. National Library of Medicine's history talks, a series of lectures on the history of medicine as seen through the lens of the world's largest biomedical library.

Most lectures clock in at about



an hour. According to the National Institutes of Health's website, the NLM contains six million items, including "one of the world's finest medical history collections of old and rare medical works."

Each talk is livestreamed, then archived on the NLM's YouTube channel. Visit the playlist at bit.ly/NLMhistory. *Erin Blakemore/For The Washington Post*

ALWAYS PLAN AHEAD



People offer encouragement during the Montreal Marathon in 2023. The final stretch of a marathon is the time for runners to tap into the energy of the crowd, Jill Barker writes. JOHN KENNEY



JILL BARKER

The fall marathon race calendar is upon us, with runners from coast to coast lacing up their shoes to tackle the 42-kilometre distance.

Anyone who has ever considered running a marathon knows it's a daunting task, even for those with multiple races under their belt. No two marathons are alike, despite that fact that the distance never varies.

But running a successful race isn't as easy as trusting your training. The key to crossing the finish line is all about managing the day.

"My first marathon was a disaster," said Mike Del Giudice, a personal trainer at the Fitness Lab in Ottawa and veteran of five marathons. "The first 30 kilometres was picture perfect, but at 32 kilometres my hamstrings cramped up every kilometre for the rest of the race."

Del Giudice tried everything to put the spring back in his legs. But nothing worked, so he hobbled his way to the finish line and swore off running for two years.

Not all marathoners have a war story to tell, but they've all learned to respect the distance. After all, if running 42 kilometres was easy, the race would be without its inherent bragging rights. That's why race plans are important. It's also why it's important to modify race plans depending on what the day brings.

A well-thought-out race key to successful marathon



It's wise for marathoners to have a Plan B and a Plan C to help conquer those 42 kilometres. GETTY IMAGES

Sometimes weather is a factor. High heat and humidity have forced many a marathoner to change their race plans. Same for rain, cold and wind. Other times it's the body that does the unexpected. Cramps, lethargy, blisters and sore muscles are just some of the physical challenges that can derail a marathoner.

"I go into every race with a Plan A, B and C," Del Giudice said. "Plan A works when the day goes perfectly. Plan B is when something isn't clicking, and Plan C is for those days when nothing is working."

Dominic Royer, who coaches the running club at Boutique Endurance in Montreal, recommends runners check in with how they're feeling several times during the race to see if anything needs changing up.

"Re-evaluate your race plan at the warm-up, after the first 10k, at the halfway mark and at the wall," Royer said.

The wall is the mile marker in the marathon where all runners struggle. Somewhere around 30 kilometres it starts feeling like you're pulling a piano. Energy stores are low, every stride is laboured, and the legs have no pop.

There are a couple of reasons why runners hit the wall. One is a depletion of carbohydrates, the fuel muscles need to power your run. The other is too much speed at the front end of the race.

Royer and Del Giudice both stress the importance of a good breakfast on race morning, eating about three hours before your scheduled start time. Just make sure that whatever you eat has been tested as part of your pre-run ritual during training. Race day isn't the time to try something new.

Plan on topping up those carbohydrate stores every 10 kilometres with energy gels, gummies or drinks, with the

same caveat as breakfast — test them out before getting to the starting line.

Once you arrive on site, keep your warm-up low-key. The same goes for the first 10 kilometres. Don't give in to the excitement of the race and keep pace with the pack running in front of you. You'll pay for it later.

"The pace should feel boring; a four on 10 on the effort scale," said Del Giudice of the first quarter of the marathon.

It's not as easy as it seems to keep it low-key out of the gate. There's a lot of hype at the start of the marathon, with competitors warming up, looking at their watch and getting their game face on. All that excitement often leads to runners burning off pent-up energy in the first leg of the race and dipping into important energy stores better used during the final stretch to the finish line.

With the first 10 kilometres

under your belt, you should be settled in at a pace that feels comfortable and let your legs carry you. Kilometres 10 to 30 are the easiest part of the race — you're warmed up, confident in your training and full of "I can do it" energy.

Kilometres 30 to 42 are anything but easy. This is the part of the race that you run with your heart.

"Everyone is in the hurt locker," said Del Giudice of the last leg of the race. "Now is the time to remind yourself of your 'why' (why you chose to run a marathon)."

"Stay positive," said Royer of that final stretch. "Think about family, all the work you did to prepare, and push hard to the finish."

This is the time to tap into the energy of the crowd, which tends to thicken at the end of the race. Del Giudice asks family and friends to line up at the 35-kilometre marker where he "needs his people the most." It's here that many a marathoner has been joined by a well-meaning family member or friend who runs alongside them for those last few kilometres.

There's no shame in relying on support from your people or shuffling to the finish line. Race plans aside, the first marathon is all about finishing. Experiencing the highs and lows of 42 kilometres on the run is the proverbial school of hard knocks when it comes to being a rookie marathoner, so take comfort in the fact that you're not alone.

Every runner struggles to finish. Just remember not to let it show when the camera flashes at the finish line.

TV WATCH

Shows keep you in the game

Quiz programs can benefit your mind

MELISSA HANK

When television first found widespread popularity in the 1950s and 1960s, along with programs geared to boost ratings and commercials geared to sell, many derided it as a guilty pleasure that corroded society. It was the “boob tube,” they said, and nothing good could come of it. But experts now say game shows such as Jeopardy! and Wheel of Fortune can actually benefit the mind.

“Game shows have a number of cognitively stimulating features that could provide cognitive benefits,” Glen R. Finney, a fellow of the American Academy of Neurology, recently told New York Post. He’s also the director of the Memory and Cognition Program with Geisinger Health in Wilkes-Barre, Penn.

He added that viewers need to pay close attention to game shows so they can quickly process information, solve problems or recall knowledge. “This engages numerous networks in the brain in an engaging and enjoyable way, which also enhances learning,” said Finney. “We know that engaging in regular cognitive activities like this that challenge you can boost mental acuity.”

Trivia shows — such as Who Wants to Be a Millionaire and Jeopardy! — are particularly helpful for older adults. As we age, it’s more difficult for us to quickly access information in our long-term semantic memory or memory for general knowledge.

“What game shows like Jeopardy! can do is to train and improve the ability to access this stored memory information more quickly, which could prove beneficial in everyday life, particularly for older adults,” Ashley Curtis, assistant professor and director of the Cognition, Aging, Sleep and Health Lab at the College of Nursing at the University of South Florida, told New York Post.

In addition, game shows can enrich your well-being. A 2021 study published in the Journal of Psychological Rehabilitation and Mental Health found that people’s mental health increased when watching game shows. The study, which focused on people with severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, cited the interactive nature of game shows and their ability to distract viewers from negative real-world circumstances. Sports programs achieved a similar effect.

Curtis also cited the benefits of watching game shows with friends and family, explaining that in-person social interactions have been associated with better psychological well-being.

“Research shows that active, rather than passive, mental activity is most beneficial for our overall health,” Curtis told Fox News Digital. “So, keeping both your brain and body active is beneficial to our mental and physical health as we age.”



Watching game shows is good for our minds, experts say. Here, Vince Bacani, right, is seen on the set of Jeopardy! with host Ken Jennings. Bacani a one-game winner. JEOPARDY!



Faith, friendship and reputations are all on the line for the friends in the new reality-based series The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives. DISNEY+

NOT-SO-SECRET LIVES

A swinging sex scandal blows up friendships — and sponsorships

The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives Disney+

MARÍA LUISA PAÚL

As the world began emerging from the height of the coronavirus pandemic in 2021, a collective of women known as #MomTok took social media by storm with their giant Stanley Cups, co-ordinated athleisure outfits and viral dances.

But the wholesome image portrayed by the friend group of Mormon TikTok stars — all moms in Utah — came crashing down in 2022 with a sex scandal. Taylor Frankie Paul, one of #MomTok’s main creators, announced she and her husband had decided to divorce after “soft swinging” with other couples in their friend group.

Enter The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives. The eight-episode reality TV series streaming in Canada on Disney+ follows eight #MomTok influencers as they navigate the scandal’s aftermath. (Warning: Spoilers ahead.)

WHAT IS #MOMTOK?

“#MomTok is essentially a content creator house except for we don’t actually live together,” Mayci Neeley explains in the show. “And we’re all moms, we’re all Mormons. I guess you could say a lot of us in #MomTok look similar ...”

Soon, it became a powerhouse that ushered in brand deals and other lucrative opportunities.

“I think what #MomTok did so well was making very conservative family values ... very sort of sexy and relevant on TikTok,” says Kate Davis, the Krieger visiting scholar in religious studies at Defiance College in Ohio. At the same time, Davis said, some of the women push the envelope on how outsiders might expect Mormon wives and mothers to act.

And that’s the point: “We are trying to change the stigma of the gender roles in the Mormon culture,” Neeley says.

WHAT’S SO SCANDALOUS ABOUT #MOMTOK?

In May 2022, Paul announced in a lip-synching video on TikTok that she was divorcing her husband. The story seemed simple: two people who didn’t want to be together anymore but were committed to their two children.

Controversy erupted after Paul told her millions of followers in a now-infamous TikTok Live video that she and her then-husband had been taking part in “soft swinging,” a type of consensual non-monogamy she described as “when you just hook up, but you don’t go all the way.”

Paul also said she had “messed up” by violating the boundaries she and her husband had agreed upon — and then suggested, without naming names, that other people in her friend group were drinking and swapping partners, too.

“No one is innocent,” Paul said. “Everyone has hooked up with everyone.”

Those claims quickly escaped the app and went viral, fuelling a wave of speculation. Caught in the dragnet were Paul’s influencer friends and the wider community of Mormon mom TikTokers, who were left fielding assumptions that they, too, were involved in the partner swapping. (Many have publicly said they were not.)

It didn’t help that Paul was later arrested and charged with assault and domestic violence in the presence of a child after having an altercation with her new boyfriend. In August 2023, she pleaded guilty to aggravated assault, and the other charges were dismissed.

For Whitney Leavitt, one of the #MomTokers, the arrest was the final straw. The sex scandal “gave us publicity,” Leavitt said — but it has also affected their brand deals, livelihoods and reputation, she tells other mom influencers as they plot out how to “change the culture” of #MomTok.

WHERE DOES THE SHOW PICK UP?

Following eight women of #MomTok about two years after the scandal, the show isn’t necessarily about swinging, as much as it is about friendship, faith, womanhood, struggle and reinvention. The storyline heavily involves the fallout from Paul’s TikTok rev-

elation and highlights a feud between Paul and Leavitt, who is portrayed as a Regina George-esque figure aiming for Paul’s #MomTok throne. There’s also as much infighting as one would expect in a reality TV show — in one instance, the group separates itself into “sinners” and “saints” cliques based on how closely they follow Mormon doctrine.

At the same time, though, the series shows vulnerable moments as the women come together to support one another, strive to repair their friendships and secure their continued influencer work.

As the series synopsis reads: “Faith, friendship and reputations are all on the line. Will #MomTok be able to survive and continue to give the rule book a run for its money, or will this group fall from grace?”

DOES #MOMTOK SURVIVE THE SCANDAL?

The verdict is still out. On an individual level, the #MomTokers are doing pretty well for themselves — together raking in a collective 11.3 million followers on TikTok.

“The thing is that their image was aspirational — it’s this lifestyle that they have that any other person would want, too,” Davis said. “And once you shatter that image, I’m not sure you can put it back together.”

The Washington Post

A woman of the world

Actress Lily Collins is Emily in Paris — and in Rome and in Barcelona, too

HILARY FOX

ROME First Paris, now Rome and next Barcelona — Lily Collins is taking on two more European cities.

As the star and producer of Emily in Paris, she’s been playing the unlucky-in-love marketing executive, breaking hearts in France for the past three seasons of the Netflix show.

That changes in part 2 of the fourth season when, in her usual dramatic fashion, Emily heads to Italy. The cast, including Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, Lucas Bravo, Ashley Park and Camille Razat, were all in Rome recently to premiere the new episodes set there.

Barcelona comes into play this October when Collins makes her West End debut opposite Álvaro Morte in a stage thriller named after the Spanish city.

In a recent interview in Rome, Collins explains why it’s the right time for her London stage debut and how filming in Rome allowed her to channel Audrey Hepburn’s onscreen Italian adventure in Roman Holiday.

Q Would you ever play Audrey Hepburn?

A Yes. I mean, I love her. There is no ever replicating her, but she is someone that I’ve grown up admiring.

Q There were two distinct nods to her (in part 2) — Roman Holiday and Charade — did I miss anything?

A No, I think those were (the) two. Roman Holiday, there’s an essence of her the whole time. Because if you’re here, how can you not, you know?

Q What was it like filming those scenes around Rome with the Vespa ...

A Stunning.

Q I imagine you had to go around quite a few times?

A We went around so many times, which was funny because then tourists, of course, are noticing that there’s this massive machine and then a car with a Vespa attached to it. And then we are going on an actual Vespa. But then there’s also the transport vehicle. So like, what are



France’s first lady Brigitte Macron, centre, has a cameo in the series Emily in Paris, starring Lily Collins, left, and Thalia Besson. NETFLIX

they filming? And then once they figured out it was our show, it was fun.

It was also surreal because you’re going around the Colosseum and everything in Rome is beautiful and ancient. And I was pinching myself, but it was amazing to be able to explore another city.

I’d been to Paris before the show, so playing (Emily) who was coming to it fresh, was a character. Whereas this time, I’d been to Rome but never fully explored or been here for a long period of time.

So it was a whole new adventure, but genuinely for me as well. And it was more of a vacation mode for Emily, which I was

happy for her. I was like, “You go, girl. You get a little vacay.”

Q I want to ask you about moving from the TV show to theatre.

A I’m very excited. But of course, I’m also nervous. And it’s a whole new world for me. I did theatre as a kid, but this is something I’ve been dreaming of my whole life. And the West End is the West End. But it really feels just surreal and I love my team that we’re working with. I think it’s a beautiful, beautiful script. And the theatre is one of a kind, I love the Duke of York (Theatre) and our director (Lynette Linton). It’s a wonderful, wonderful group.

The Associated Press

DEFYING GRAVITY

How we stay balanced and upright

RICHARD SIMA

Olympic gymnasts twist, turn and tumble through the air, dazzling us with their gravity-defying feats. But the rest of us also defy gravity as we stand, walk, reach and run in our daily lives, thanks to our often underappreciated vestibular sense of balance and the calculations our brains perform to keep us upright. As the only species that stands upright predominantly on just two legs, humans are “inherently unstable,” said Kathleen Cullen, a professor of biomedical engineering, neuroscience and otolaryngology at Johns Hopkins University. But “we take for granted our ability to maintain balance and walk across the floor because it’s all happening in the background,” said Cullen, who is the director of the university’s Center of Hearing and Balance.

The vestibular system has five sensory organs nestled within each inner ear, attached to the auditory system’s cochlea.

Three loop-shaped sensors, called semicircular canals, sense rotation in all three dimensions — when we nod our head up and down, shake it side to side, or roll our necks.

The other two sensors are called otoliths, literally “ear stones” in Greek, for the calcium carbonate crystals found within. One otolith detects horizontal linear acceleration, while the other detects vertical acceleration and gravity.

Together, these vestibular sensory organs detect all possible head motions like the sensors “that we all carry around with us in our phone,” said Daniel Merfeld, professor of otolaryngology at Ohio State University. Unlike smartphone sensors, the vestibular system is ancient, evolving in jawless fish some 350-400 million years ago, attesting to its importance.

But staying balanced while moving also requires another underappreciated, largely subconscious sensory system: proprioception, the sense of where our body is and its movement without looking. Mechanosensory neurons in our muscles, tendons and joints also allow us to perceive the force generated by our muscles and the weight of objects we lift.

Crucially, both the vestibular and proprioceptive systems work



Tai chi, yoga and dancing are great ways to stay active while reducing injury risk as we age. Walking on grass or rougher terrain or playing golf can also provide a good challenge for body and balance. GETTY IMAGES

We all think what we perceive is what the world perceives. And, in fact, there's big differences in how we perceive the world.

fast, a necessary feature for staying balanced.

For American gymnast Simone Biles, “perfecting something on the beam or on the mat, any sort of in-the-moment correction would be done with vestibular and proprioceptive feedback,” Cullen said. “Everything else, vision, is just too slow.”

The same is true for even a more modest goal such as walking across the room, she said.

All of these calculations occur automatically and predictively because of the cerebellum, a portion of the brain located at the back of our head that is essential for seemingly effortless balance.

This brain region integrates information from the vestibular, proprioceptive and other sensory systems in real time and constantly generates and updates an internal model of what it expects to happen when we move and compares that with what actually happens.

If reality matches the cerebellum’s expectations, we can continue on. If it doesn’t, such as when we slip or our muscles become fatigued, we need to make a postural correction.

Although we may often take the cerebellum’s background computations for granted, losing them can be devastating.

For patients with cerebellar ataxia — a dysfunction of the cerebellum — walking across the room requires more conscious, arduous effort as they need to rely on their eyes to see where and how their feet are placed, Cullen said.

In healthy people, there is an

“amazing amount of variation” in our ability to sense vestibular motion, Merfeld said. When we are tilted or moved in a chair and asked to indicate the direction of the motion — “kind of like the vestibular version of a hearing test” — the ability to detect direction can differ by a factor of 10.

Like our other senses, our vestibular function worsens with age. Though it is relatively stable up until around 40 years old, it gets progressively worse each year, Merfeld said.

This decrement in vestibular sensitivity is believed to contribute to problems with falling as we age; as our ability to sense our body’s rotation and tilt diminishes, we may be less able to notice when we are getting off balance before it is too late.

Researchers still do not know exactly what causes the loss of vestibular function with age, but studies have shown that there may be a dramatic decrease in vestibular sensory cells (known as hair cells), with age.

These falls can be dangerous and costly; nearly 30 per cent of adults

65 or older fall each year, suffering injury and even death. The Global Burden of Disease Study estimated that falls led to the loss of nearly 17 million years of life worldwide. In 2017. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to detect this decrease in vestibular capacity in ourselves.

“We all think what we perceive is what the world perceives. And, in fact, there’s big differences in how we perceive the world,” Merfeld said.

Keeping active as we age is key, researchers say. The vestibular and proprioceptive systems are activated by movement, so it is important to move however you can.

Getting a physical therapist or personal coach may be useful, while tai chi, yoga or dancing are other great ways to keep active while reducing injury risk, Cullen said. Walking on grass or rougher terrain or playing golf could provide a good challenge for your body and inner ear, Merfeld said. “The good news is that the brain is super plastic,” Cullen said. “All this power is there to be harnessed, and you won’t harness that unless you move.”

The Washington Post

Shingles vaccine may ease risk of dementia

Research presented at medical event suggests 20% reduction in diagnosis rate

ELIZABETH COHEN

The shingles vaccine, recommended for people 50 and older to fight the painful viral infection, might also decrease the chances of developing dementia, according to data presented at a recent medical conference.

The study, which looked at the health records of hundreds of thousands of people across the United States, shows that those who received the shingles vaccine were 20 per cent less likely to be diagnosed with dementia in the five years after vaccination compared with a control group of people who received a vaccine for a different illness.

Pharmaceutical giant GSK, which makes the Shingrix vaccine, funded and performed the research, and presented it at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference in Philadelphia.

Vaccine experts who were not involved in the research said that more definitive studies need to be done, but they noted the study adds to growing recognition that infectious agents may play a role in the development of some types of dementia.

“I think this is something that we have to take seriously,” said Peter Hotez, a physician and co-di-

rector of the Texas Children’s Hospital Center for Vaccine Development.

The GSK research follows two other large studies, which were not funded by the industry, that also show a lower risk for dementia among those who were vaccinated against shingles.

Recently, researchers in the United Kingdom published a study in *Nature Medicine* looking at medical records of hundreds of thousands of people over six years and found that those who received Shingrix were up to 27 per cent less likely to develop dementia compared with people who received vaccines against other diseases. That research was not funded by GSK, but one of the authors is a consultant for the company.

Another study of more than 282,000 people in Wales found that those who received a different shingles vaccine had a 22.4 per cent lower risk of being diagnosed with dementia in the seven years after vaccination compared with those who didn’t receive the vaccine. That research, which was led by researchers at Stanford University, was published last year in the journal *Alzheimer’s & Dementia*.

“We are seeing different groups, different methodologies, coming



Vaccinating against shingles may offer protection against the development of some types of dementia, according to a growing body of research that some physicians say needs to be taken more seriously. GETTY IMAGES

up with not exactly the same results, but broadly similar results,” said Phil Dormitzer, global head of vaccines research and development and infectious-disease research at GSK.

One out of three people will get shingles in their lifetime, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The infection is a reactivation of the chickenpox virus, which can lie dormant in the nervous system. While rarely life-threatening, shingles causes distressing symptoms including a painful rash with blisters that can last for several weeks. It can also lead to blindness

and to neurological pain that can persist for months or years.

Vaccine experts say the possibility of a connection between the shingles vaccine and reduced risk of dementia makes sense.

“I think it’s real,” said Paul Offit, a physician and professor of vaccinology at the University of Pennsylvania. He’s also a member of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s vaccines and related biological products advisory committee.

Offit and other experts said there are two possible reasons that the shingles vaccine might protect against dementia. First, previous

research suggests that herpes infection may play a role in the development of dementia.

Shingrix dramatically decreases the reactivation of the herpes virus that causes chickenpox. It’s 97 per cent effective at preventing shingles in people ages 50 to 69 with healthy immune systems, according to the CDC.

Experts also hypothesize there might be something about the particular way Shingrix stimulates the body’s immune system against shingles that decreases the chances of dementia.

Hotez, the vaccine expert in Texas, said that if more studies show that Shingrix protects against dementia, it could be “another carrot to induce people to want to get it.”

Only 18.6 per cent of people in the U.S. who are aged 50 and older have received at least one dose of Shingrix, which is given in two doses, according to CDC data from 2021. The CDC also recommends the vaccine to anyone age 19 and older with a weakened immune system.

Dormitzer, the GSK scientist, said the company is doing more studies to see if there truly is a relationship between the shingles vaccine and preventing dementia.

“We have a very interesting clue here,” he said. “We have more work to do at this point.”

William Schaffner, a physician and infectious-disease researcher at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, said that if the relationship withstands further scrutiny, it would be “big news — capital B, capital N, because at the moment, we have a very limited number of things we can do to prevent or intervene on behalf of people who have Alzheimer’s.”

For The Washington Post

Today

H: 20 L: 8
P.O.P: 10%
Sunny.
Wind: S, 18kmh

Tomorrow

H: 20 L: 12
P.O.P: 30%
Mainly sunny.
Wind: SE, 18kmh

Wednesday

H: 17 L: 9
P.O.P: 60%
Cloudy, showers.
Wind: NW, 29kmh

Thursday

H: 19 L: 8
P.O.P: 20%
Mainly sunny.
Wind: SE, 11kmh

Friday

H: 16 L: 7
P.O.P: 30%
Mix, sun and clouds.
Wind: W, 17kmh

North America Weather

The Weather Network

Canada Today Tomorrow

Banff	18/5	S	18/8	SH
Brandon	25/16	PC	26/19	PC
Calgary	20/8	S	20/12	S
Charlottetown	25/15	S	25/18	S
Churchill	14/9	S	21/10	S
Corner Brook	20/13	PC	22/14	S
Edmonton	21/7	S	21/11	S
Fredericton	29/15	S	29/18	S
Halifax	24/15	S	27/17	S
Iqaluit	5/3	SH	4/2	SH
Kelowna	21/9	S	23/10	S
Moncton	27/16	S	28/18	S
Montreal	28/16	S	27/17	S
Ottawa	28/15	S	27/18	S
Quebec	27/16	S	27/17	S
Regina	25/16	T	26/17	PC
Saint John	21/13	S	24/16	S
Saskatoon	23/13	S	23/17	T
Sherbrooke	27/12	S	27/15	S
St John's	20/15	S	20/14	S
Sudbury	28/9	S	27/15	S
Thunder Bay	26/17	T	25/16	SH
Toronto	25/17	S	24/18	S
Vancouver	19/12	S	16/13	R
Victoria	21/12	S	15/13	SH
Whitehorse	12/2	SH	11/4	S
Winnipeg	27/18	T	27/22	PC
Yellowknife	16/9	SH	15/10	PC

Precipitation

September

Normal, Month [mm]: 36.2

Current: 57.6

Difference: +21.4

Percent of Normal: 159%

Temperature Trend

Today is WARMER than Average.

Today's Average [°C]: 17

Expected [at 3pm ET]: 20

Difference: +3

ALBERTA Today Tomorrow

Athabasca	20/7	S	22/11	S
Barrhead	18/5	S	18/8	SH
Barnhart	20/8	S	21/10	S
Bassano	21/9	S	19/13	PC
Bonnyville	22/9	S	21/13	S
Bragg Creek	18/7	S	18/10	S
Brooks	22/11	S	19/13	SH
Calgary	20/8	S	20/12	S
Camrose	21/8	S	21/12	S
Carver	20/8	S	21/11	S
Cold Lake	21/10	S	20/13	S
Consortion	21/9	S	19/13	PC
Drayton Valley	19/8	S	19/10	S
Edson	19/5	S	19/9	S
Fort Chipewyan	19/5	PC	20/12	S
Fort McMurray	21/8	S	22/11	S
Grand Cache	19/4	PC	19/7	S
Grande Prairie	20/7	PC	21/10	PC
High Level	19/6	PC	19/9	PC
High Prairie	19/8	PC	21/10	S
Hinton	19/5	S	19/7	S
Jasper	18/4	S	19/7	S
Lac La Biche	20/9	S	21/12	S
Lethbridge	21/11	SH	18/12	SH
Lloydminster	22/9	S	18/15	R
Medicine Hat	23/13	S	19/13	T
Okotoks	19/8	S	19/12	PC
Peace River	20/7	PC	22/11	S
Ponoka	21/7	S	21/11	S
Provost	22/10	S	18/14	SH
Red Deer	21/8	S	21/12	S
Rocky Ridge	20/18	S	20/12	S
Slave Lake	18/8	PC	20/11	S
Stettler	21/8	S	20/12	S
Swan Hills	18/6	S	17/8	S
Valleyview	19/6	PC	21/10	S
Vegreville	21/8	S	21/12	S
Vermilion	22/9	S	21/13	S
Wainwright	22/9	S	19/13	PC
Westlock	20/7	S	21/11	S
Wetaskiwin	20/7	S	21/12	S
Whitecourt	20/8	S	20/9	S

Alberta Roads

Phone: 511

Website: 511.alberta.ca

Twitter: @511Alberta

Today's Sun

Sunrise: 7:12am

Sunset: 7:50pm

Sunlight Hours: 11

WORLD Today Tomorrow

Amsterdam	20/11	S	20/13	S
Athens	28/19	S	28/20	S
Auckland	15/10	SH	12/8	SH
Bangkok	33/26	R	33/25	T
Beijing	28/19	S	28/19	S
Beirut	30/26	PC	29/25	PC
Belgrade	13/10	R	21/11	S
Berlin	18/14	R	25/14	S
Bogota	21/10	S	21/9	S
Bucharest	21/9	S	24/13	PC
Buenos Aires	22/14	S	21/16	PC
Calao	36/23	S	36/22	S
Cape Town	17/10	S	17/9	SH
Copenhagen	17/13	PC	20/15	PC
Dubai	40/30	S	39/30	S
Dublin	18/7	PC	19/8	S
Edinburgh	17/8	PC	20/8	S
Geneva	18/12	S	19/11	PC
Ho Chi Minh	33/26	T	31/25	T
Hong Kong	30/27	PC	31/27	T
Istanbul	25/19	S	25/19	S
Jerusalem	26/18	SH	26/17	S
Kyiv	25/17	PC	25/15	S
Lisbon	33/21	S	32/16	S
London	21/11	S	21/14	S
Madrid	30/15	S	29/16	S
Manila	31/26	SH	31/26	SH
Mexico City	25/16	R	24/16	S
Milan	23/12	PC	21/12	SH
Moscow	24/13	S	24/13	S
Munich	10/9	R	15/7	SH
New Delhi	34/25	S	32/25	PC
Paris	21/13	PC	21/14	SH
Prague	15/13	R	21/12	S
Rio de Janeiro	27/21	SH	22/20	C
Rome	24/14	S	23/14	SH
Seoul	32/25	S	31/25	T
Shanghai	28/27	R	32/25	SH
Singapore	29/25	T	29/26	SH
Stockholm	18/10	SH	20/10	PC
Sydney	19/11	S	21/10	S
Tehran	28/20	PC	30/21	S
Tokyo	28/24	SH	31/26	S
Venna	12/10	R	18/11	PC
Warsaw	23/14	PC	24/13	S

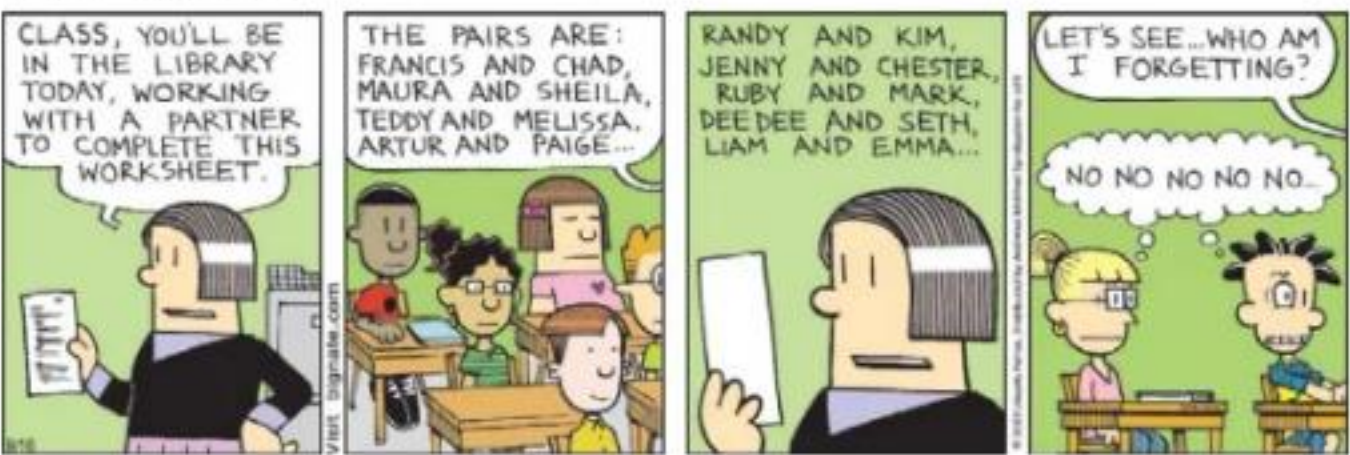
TV TIMES TONIGHT - MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16														MOVIES	TALK	SPORTS	KIDS
C	B	5 PM	5:30	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30		
3	4	CTV	News (N) Live	News (N)	CTV News Calgary at 6 (N) Live	etalk (N)	Big Bang	*** Thor: Ragnarok (17) Tom Hiddleston, Chris Hemsworth.							CTV (N)	News (N)	
4	38	OMNI	Omni News (N)	Celebrity	Celebrity	Omni News	Punjabi (N)	News (N)	Omni News	OMNI News (N)	Cantonese (N)	News (N)	Cantonese	News-Punjabi	Focus Punjabi		
5		ABC	4 News Now on KXLY+ (N)	4 News Now (N)	World News (N)	4 News Now (N)	4 News Now (N)	Inside Ed. (N)	ET (N)	Celebrity Family Feud (N)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N)			
6	9	CBC	Jamie's Quick	Jamie's Quick	News (N)	News (N)	Coronation (N)	Schitt's Creek	Secrets of Prince Andrew (N) (P)			The National (N)		News (N)	Still Standing		
7	2	Global	News (N)	Global (N)	Global News Hour at 6 (N)	The Goldbergs	ET (N)	NCIS: Sydney		NCIS		NCIS: Sydney		Global News at 11 (N)			
8	5	CITY	Clarkson Anne Hathaway (N)	CityNews at 6 Calgary (N)	Family Feud	Family Feud	Celebrity Family Feud (N)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	Celebrity Family Feud (N) (SF)	CityNews (N)	(35) J.Kimmel (N)		
9		CBC-F	(4:00) On va se (..)	Silence (N)	TJ Alberta (N)	Téléjour. (N)	Stat (N)	Discussion (N)	Dumas (N)			Le téléjournal (N)		Sports (N)	On va se le dire		
11		CMT	Cheers	Cheers	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	Workaholics	Workaholics	Becker	Becker	Wings	Wings	The Office	The Office	
12		CBS	KREM 2 News at 4 (N)	News (N)	CBS News (N)	KREM 2 News at 6 (N)		Dateline		NCIS		NCIS: Sydney		NCIS: Sydney			
13		CTV2	Bob Heart	News (N)	Primetime (N)	How It's Made	Big Bang	etalk (N)	* Riddled With Deceit: A Martha's Vineyard Mystery (20)			Suits		Primetime	(35) J. Fallon (N)		
15		PBS	Alma's Way	Xavier Riddle	America	Opportun	PBS News Hour (N)	WA. Grown	Alice's	Antiques Roadshow	Test Kitchen 25	American Masters		American Masters			
15		NN	Canada Tonight With Travis Dhanraj (N)				The National (N)	The National (N)	The National (N)	The National (N)	The National (N)	The National (N)		The National (N)			
16		NBC	NonStop (N)	NonStop (N)	NonStop (N)	NBC News (N)	NonStop (N)	NonStop (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel (N)	American Ninja Warrior Women's Championship			The Wall			
17		TREE	PeppaPig	PeppaPig	(15) Blaze	(40) Thomas	Rubble	(40) Binky	(05) Franklin	PeppaPig	Bubble	(45) Rivets	(10) Ready.	Various	(20) Max & Ruby	(45) Blue	
18		HGTV	Love It or List It		Unsellable Houses		Celebrity IOU (N)		Celebrity IOU (N)		Hunters (N)	House Hunters	Celebrity IOU		Celebrity IOU		
20		YTV	(4:00) *** Nancy Drew (07)		Loud House	Popularity	*** Nancy Drew (07) Josh Flitter, Emma Roberts.				Loud House	Popularity	Danger Force	Danger Force	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	
21		TSN	NFL Cntdwn (N) Live		(15) NFL Football Atlanta Falcons at Philadelphia Eagles From Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia. (N) Live						SC With Jay Onrait (N) Live			SportsCentre (N) Live			
22		FOX	Two Half Men	Last Man	Modern Family	Big Bang	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Big Bang	9-1-1: Lone Star		TMZ Investigates (N)		News (N)	(35) FamFeud	
23		W	The Good Wife		The Good Doctor		Will & Grace	Mindy	Superstore	Superstore	Ghosts	Ghosts	Ghosts	Neighbor	Elsbeth		
24		TLC	90 Day Fiancé: The Other Way		90 Day Fiancé: Other Way (N)		I Love a Mama's Boy (N) (SP)	(05) 90 Day Fiancé: Other (N)	(05) Welcome to Plathville		90 Day Fiancé: The Other Way		I Love a Mama's Boy				
25		FOOD	Halloween Baking		Halloween Baking		Halloween Baking Championship (N) (SP)		Alex vs America		Halloween Baking Championship						
26		A&E	The First 48		The First 48		The First 48		The First 48		(05) The First 48		(05) The First 48		(05) The First 48		
27		SNW	MLB Baseball Los Angeles Dodgers at Atlanta Braves From Truist Park in Atlanta. (N) Live				Sportsnet Central (N) Live		MLB Baseball Houston Astros at San Diego Padres (N) Live		Sportsnet (N)	Sportsnet					
28		CNN	Erin Burnett OutFront (N) Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (N) Live		The Source With (N) Live		CNN NewsNight (N) Live		Laura Coates Live (N) Live		Anderson Cooper 360		The Source With Kaitlan Collins		
30		SN360	UFC Main Event		WWE Monday Night RAW (N) Live				Misplays	Plays	WWE Monday Night RAW						
32		SHOW	FBI				Bel-Air (N)		FBI		FBI		FBI		FBI		
33		SLCE	Neighbor	Neighbor	TrueCrime (N) (..)	True Crime (N)	Below Deck Mediterranean (N)	Deadly Waters (N) (SP)		Daily Show (N)	(45) After Midnight (N)	True Crime	True Crime	King			
35		ST22W	(3:45) * Casper	*** My Girl	(91) Anna Chlumsky.	(15) *** My Girl 2 (93) Dan Aykroyd, Anna Chlumsky.			*** Dazed and Confused (93)		(45) *** Clerks III (22) Brian O'Halloran.						
36		DISC	Mayday		Bering Sea Gold (N)		Deadliest Catch Encountering a gauntlet of Bering Sea weather. (N)		NUMB3RS		NUMB3RS		Bering Sea Gold				
38		CTVDR	Chicago Fire		Chicago Fire		(55) Emperor (N) (SF)	(10) Insomnia (N)	(10) Chicago Fire		(05) Chicago Fire		Chicago Fire				
37		OLN	(4:30) BelowDeck	Below Deck		Below Deck		Below Deck		Below Deck		Below Deck		Below Deck		Below Deck	
38		TOON	Hotel/(15) Total	Beyblade X	Teen/(15) Teen	Teen/(45) Teen	Teen/(15) Teen	Pokémon	Looney/ Looney	Scooby-Doo	Teen/(15) Teen	Teen/(45) Teen	Batman	Batman	Batman	Batman	
39		FAM	LEGO Friends	LEGO Dream	*** Megamind (10) Voices of Brad Pitt, Will Ferrell.				Ruby and the Well (N)		We Are Family		Degrassi	Life Derek	*** Megamind (10)		
40		PCH	The Conners	The Conners	All American: Homecoming (N)	Police 24/7			Atlanta News First at 10pm (N)	Inside Ed. (N)	GMFB: Overtime (N)	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Last Man			
41		CTVCo	Children Ruin	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	The Conners	The Conners	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	
42		TCM	(3:30) *** Tokyo Story	*** To Have and Have Not (44) Humphrey Bogart.					*** The Big Sleep (46) Lauren Bacall, Humphrey Bogart.		*** Dark Passage (47) Lauren Bacall, Humphrey Bogart.						
43		HIST	History's Greatest Mysteries	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	S.W.A.T.		Beyond Skinwalker Ranch	Skinwalker Ranch		History's-Mysteries (N)		Escapes With Morgan (N)				
46		CTVSci	Star Trek	Star Trek				Tokyo Vice (N)	(15) Castle	(15) Castle	(10) Tokyo Vice						
47		AMC	*** The Green Mile (Drama, '99) A condemned prisoner possesses a miraculous healing power. David Morse, Tom Hanks.						*** Rocky IV (85) Talia Shire, Sylvester Stallone.		*** Stand by Me (86)						
49		DTOUT	Border	Border	Border	Border	Alaska Haunting	Destination Fear	Paranormal Lockdown	Alaska Haunting	Destination Fear						
51	32	YESTV	The Middle	Mike & Molly	Murdoch Mysteries	Wheel (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Bull	Huntley	Hear, Love	Life Today	Hagee (N)	Heartland				
65		TLN	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Crazy Rich Agents		Incredible Homes	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	For the Love	Dream of Italy	A Taste of	Chef Sang	
119		MUCH	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Simpsons	Futurama	Dark Side of the Ring (N)	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	The Simpsons	Futurama		
120		MTV	How It's Made	How It's Made	Ridiculous (N)	Ridiculous (N)	Ridiculous (N)	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	
122		VISN	Murder, She Wrote		Tom Jones		Bake (N)	Bake	theZoomer		Murdoch Mysteries		*** Far and Away (92) Nicole Kidman, Tom Cruise.				
126		TV5	Louis XIV et ses espions (N)		Normandie, terre de guerriers		39-45 en sol canadien (N)		1914, un été en enfer (N)		(10) C dans l'air (N)		(15) Afrique (N) (45) Journal (N) (15) 39-45 en sol canadien				
127		APTN	(2:00) Channel No		Channel No Longer Available This channel is no longer available.						Channel No Longer Available This channel is no longer available.						

PAY-TV

GARFIELD



BIG NATE



PEANUTS



BABY BLUES



PICKLES



CRABGRASS



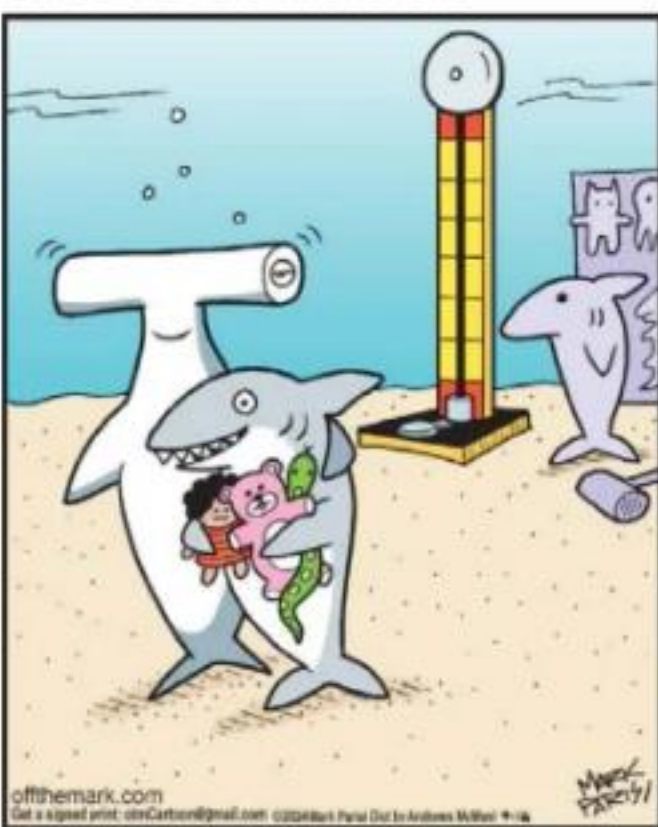
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



ROSE IS ROSE



OFF THE MARK



THE ARGYLE SWEATER



CORNERED



LOOSE PARTS



ADAM@HOME



SHERMAN'S LAGOON



MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



LUANN



POOCH CAFE



CRANKSHAFT



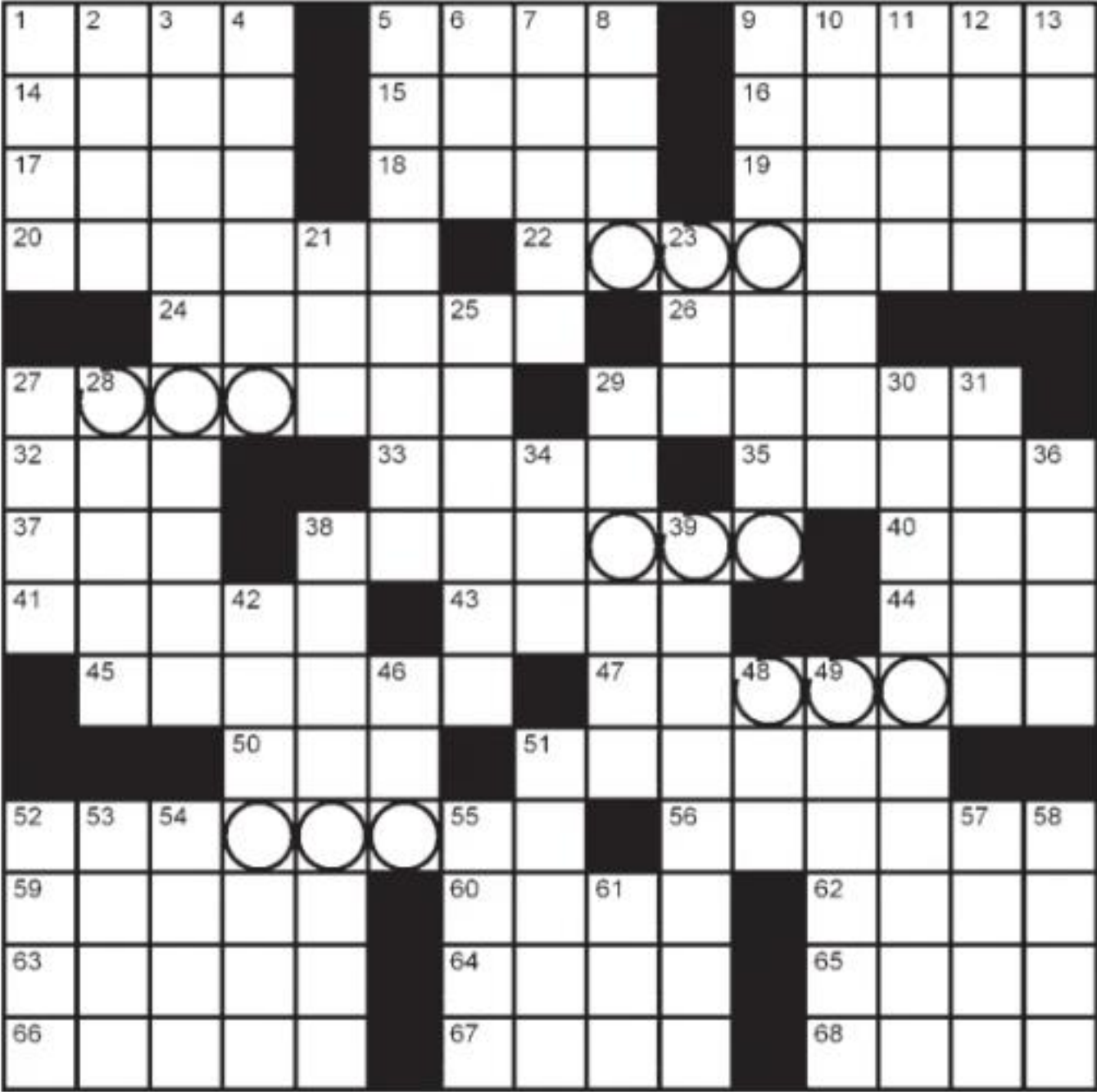
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



LIO



UNIVERSAL CROSSWORD



WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

CONVINCE ME

Solution: 7 letters

ECNEULFNIMPRESS
UXOTYFITSUJSETC
RRPNHBMARKETRHO
TEGLVILVLAOAPR
EAEAEAENELRNNOER
LSSSSSRKTGGWERE
BOSAFINSNEEOSSC
ANUCFVNIERFHIUT
VTCYAOLAFASFVAN
IISLMLSUCLEIDSE
EMIEESLTPECCAUI
CDDPUESWAYTVEVQ
NAMROFNINSPIREO
OOEYLEKILACIGOL
CONCLUSIV ECITNE

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Accept, Admit, Advise, Assure, Case, Change, Compelling, Conceivable, Conclusive, Converse, Correct, Demonstrate, Discuss, Effect, Eloquent, Entice, Explain, Facts, Find, Impress, Influence, Inform, Inspire, Justify, Likely, Logical, Market, Persuasive, Powerful, Reason, Sales, Sell, Show, Strong, Sway, Think, True, Urge, Valid, Verify

UNIVERSAL

Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

4

8

1

5

5

2

8

6

3

4

5

7

8

2

1

3

5

4

5

2

3

9

1

7

1

3

7

8

8

1

2

5

7

9

6

1

4

6

7

4

8

9/16

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES

SOLUTIONS

1 stylists' shops (6)

2 first Democratic president (7)

3 succulent with soothing gel (4)

4 taking apart scientifically (10)

5 optometrist's solution (8)

6 to-do lists (7)

7 butterfly and freestyle (7)

ONS

SAL

KS

DI

AL

ON

SS

AG

AS

EYE

ROK

ST

JAC

ECT

DR

ES

OPS

END

ING

OE

Answers: 1. SALONS 2. JACKSON 3. ALONE 4. DISSECTING 5. EYEDROPS 6. AGENDAS 7. STROKES

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KENKEN

THE LOGIC PUZZLE THAT MAKES YOU SMARTER.

Instructions: Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 (easy) or 1 through 6 (challenging) without repeating. The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners. Freebies: Fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

EASY

CHALLENGING

2-

2

12X

2÷

2÷

5+

3

24X

18X

120X

3+

30X

4

14+

13+

5-

2÷

1-

24X

2-

40X

1

3-

CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

"CKJ'I TKZJI KSI EKSG NVLBM, XDFLSMD IOD BKGVC ZM JKI LM MEYTLIODIZF LJC JSGISGZJP LM EKS IOZJH." — WDJJZNDG IZVVE

Solution: "Don't point out your flaws, because the world is not as sympathetic and nurturing as you think." — Jennifer Tilly

TODAY'S CLUE: In Spanish

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Unexpected Arrivals by Amanda Winters, edited by David Steinberg

ACROSS

DOWN

1 Gyro bread

2 I was sure I landed in the Big Apple (3-5), though I was really in the Canadian city —

3 "Dune" actor Jason

4 Adderall treats it

5 Wrinkle remover

6 Plain font

7 Tush

8 Noisy

9 Alcove

10 Like many violent video games

11 I landed not in the Windy City (see letters 2-4 in this answer) but in the French city —

12 Faucet

13 Scottish John

14 I thought I had touched down in Sin City (2-4), but I was actually in the Scottish city —

15 Only human

16 Uncensored

17 Ultimatum word

18 "This — a pipe"

19 What you might jump to catch?

20 I booked a ticket to the Mile High City (5-7) but ended up in the German city —

21 — Jima

22 Andy Cohen's network

23 Word following "pig" or "pony"

24 Guys

25 Books' backs

26 I was sure I landed in the Big Apple (3-5), though I was really in the Canadian city —

27 ... --- ...

28 Go at

29 My flight to A-Town (4-6) turned out to be a flight to the Mexican town —

30 Heath bar filling

31 Popeye's paramour

32 New Zealand native

33 "Voila!"

34 Craze

35 Apple desktop

36 Periods of history

37 Teenage emotion

38 Sad ending?

39 "Reach out privately," online

40 Chinese dialect

41 Gets situated

42 Shiny makeup additive

43 Waikiki's island

44 Trebek who hosted "Jeopardy!"

45 Be into

46 River, in Spanish

47 Baby birds with big eyes

48 Take in a hurry

49 Hideouts

50 Battlefield caregivers

51 Napoleon's story

52 — your expectations

53 Nine-digit ID source

54 Theater award

55 Note in the fridge, maybe

56 Rubber bands

57 Face-to-face, literally

58 Subj. for some newcomers

59 Southeast Asian language

60 Like many products sent to influencers

61 Crunchyroll cartoon genre

62 NYC home of "The Starry Night"

63 Actor Rickman

64 Oomph

65 Similar (to)

66 Dutch cheese

67 Lighten

68 Is no longer

LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

HOROSCOPE FOR SEPTEMBER 16



BY EUGENIA LAST

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Focus on something meaningful. Make your life purposeful and fulfilling, and you will make a difference. Be smart with your money and stick to the rules.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Create opportunities. Waiting for things to happen isn't your first choice. Be the one to initiate what you want and take credit for your achievements. Life is about living, dreaming and writing your script. 3 stars

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Communicate, gather information and discover what you need to know to bring about positive change. Consider trends and how to use your skills, knowledge and experience to secure your position and prospects. 4 stars

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): A change of pace will help you recognize what you're missing. Rethink your routine and lifestyle, and replace what isn't working for you anymore. Happiness begins with the choices you make. Be good to yourself, and initiate the changes that offer peace of mind. Put yourself first. 2 stars

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Sign up for something that makes you feel alive. A healthy attitude and pouring your energy into doing and being your best will help you say no to temptation and unnecessary excess. It's time to take better care of your emotional well-being. Look and do your best. 3 stars

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Consider how to get the most out of your day. Consider how to use what you have to your advantage and to rid yourself of what you no longer use or need. Trust your instincts; you'll discover an outlet that eases stress and encourages a healthier lifestyle. 3 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Choose your words wisely and put your energy into something that matters to you. Let your hope for a bet-

ter future guide you to make a difference. Life choices that offer peace of mind will outweigh the stress the wrong path provides. 3 stars

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): An open mind will help you diminish negativity and encourage you to see the possibilities. Engage in what excites you, and you'll learn from your experiences. Give your best, and you'll receive what you require to turn your hopes and wishes into a reality. 3 stars

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Size up what's possible and do whatever it takes to reach your goal. Home improvements will spark your imagination and encourage you to resolve concerns regarding money or health issues. Take responsibility and create opportunities. Use your skills to propagate and promote what you have to offer. 5 stars

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Keep moving. Participate in activities that stir your soul and prompt you to find solutions and to change things that concern you. Don't let anyone lead you astray or deter you from doing what's right and best for you. 2 stars

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Go over your expenses, assets and liabilities and find a way to cut corners or make your life easier. Put your heart and soul into what you do; it will pay off. Use your intelligence and expertise to make a difference to the outcome. 4 stars

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Your objective is to pay attention to where your money goes. Talk to an expert or someone you trust, and do your due diligence regarding investments, budgets and lifestyle changes that can save you money. Be open to suggestions, but take responsibility for your actions and reaching your objective. 3 stars

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Rethink your journey and take the path that simplifies your life. Too much of anything will drag you down. Focus on what's important to you. Put your energy into contributing something worthwhile and making a difference. 3 stars

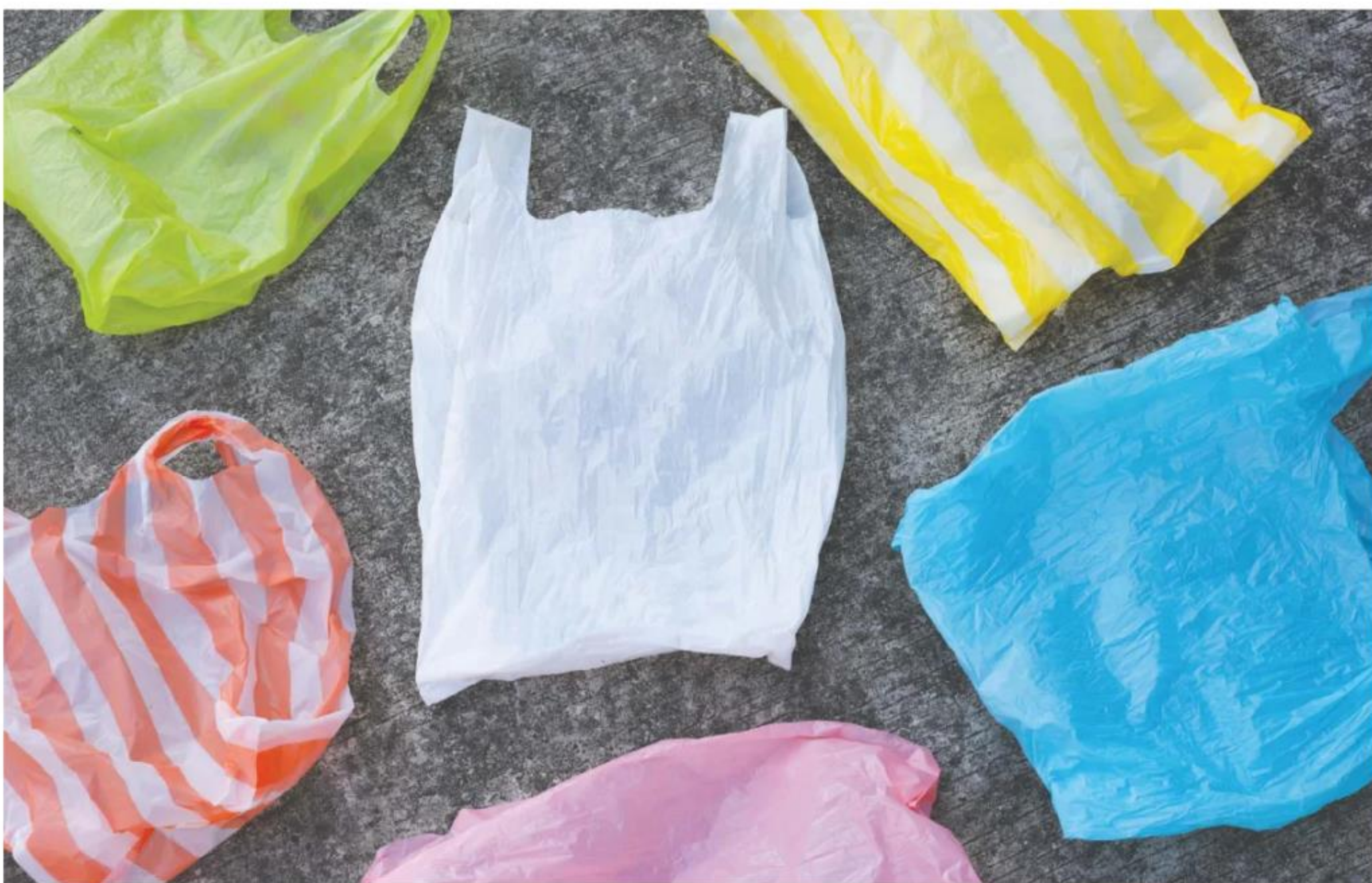
BIRTHDAY BABY: You are intelligent, efficient and innovative. You are adaptable and far-reaching.

FEATURES

“They’re kind of a technological marvel. They are incredibly lightweight. They’re waterproof. They can hold something a thousand times their weight.”
Susan Freinkel, author of Plastic: A Toxic Love Story

CALGARY HERALD MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

SECTION D



Blake Jones, a professional organizer at the Organizing Boss, says he can always count on finding 50 to 100 plastic bags stashed under his clients' sinks. GETTY IMAGES

RACHEL KURZIUS

Some people collect comic books or vinyl records. I cultivate a few collections myself.

I've got my one big plastic bag, which holds a tangle of smaller plastic bags. There's the pile of paper grocery bags behind my kitchen sink. Similar but entirely distinct is the nearby stack of "good" paper bags — the ones from nicer retailers, the ones with a cool image on them or an enticing texture or high-quality ribbon handles. A skilled bag collector can instantly sort which bags are destined to hold a dirty diaper or a wet bathing suit, which ones were built to be recycling receptacles, and which ones are worthy of transporting something special, like a dish to a potluck or a gift to a friend.

I'm hardly the only one to have a collection of bags — and subcollections within that collection. Many of us have a mental hierarchy of the bags and boxes we encounter, determining which we keep and which are destined for the trash heap. It takes a discerning eye to pluck these bags from obscurity and then, uh, stash them all over the house. The ones that make the cut tend to fulfil a number of desires: Most of all, they're helpful for some future task, plus it feels good to reuse something. And, of course, some bags and boxes — by virtue of their design or craftsmanship — are simply worthy of our admiration.

"Let's remember — they're kind of a technological marvel," says Susan Freinkel, who wrote *Plastic: A Toxic Love Story*, to describe single-use plastic bags. "They are incredibly lightweight. They're waterproof. They can hold something a thousand times their weight."

Sho Shibuya, an artist in New York City, began noticing said plastic bags when he moved from Tokyo in 2011. He was struck by their durable texture and even more so by the varied "Thank You" branding emblazoned on each. "It's very attractive, somehow," he says of the bags. "It is kind of creating a design culture."

He began amassing a 200-strong collection of these bags, publishing a coffee-table book in 2019 with gorgeous photographs of the bags called *Plastic Paper*. Ultimately

Are you DRASTIC about PLASTIC?

The practical, impractical urge to stockpile a 'good bag'

Shibuya wants the environmentally damaging bags eradicated (proceeds from the book went to an ocean protection non-profit), but he still has his collection. He describes them as folded up, Marie Kondo-style, inside a larger plastic bag.

Paper bags and boxes, too, communicate their own visual language. Shannon Mattern, a professor of media studies and the history of art at the University of Pennsylvania, began studying cardboard boxes when she learned that the Container Corporation of America, which made corru-

gated boxes in the 20th century, "attracted a staff of some of the most prominent and progressive graphic designers and architects and other designers writ large of through the postwar period," she says. "They communicate a lot about geography, logistics, our values, taste, esthetics, our belonging to a particular community." And of course, they perform the very task they were designed to: hold stuff.

Luxury items, perhaps most notably Apple products, come in boxes engineered to ensure the feeling of opening them has an element of "elegance and performativity,"

that it provides "an experience at every stage of the unboxing," she says. People often save these boxes out of sheer appreciation, or in case they need to eventually transport or sell their expensive device.

A supposed single-use shopping bag can similarly find itself toted out time and again. And these, even more so than boxes, have a chance of others spotting them.

"If the bag is from an expensive store, maybe it indicates that you have a nice income," says Sally Augustin, a principal at Design with Science, which makes recommendations to designers based

on neuroscience research. Or, it might send a message about your interests, like a bag from a craft store that "signals that you know and care about really cool crafts." And just like luxury boxes, fancy bags often do have more finesse in their design.

Professional organizers see collections of bags and boxes all the time. Blake Jones, professional organizer at the Organizing Boss, says it's common to find 50 to 100 plastic bags in the cabinet under a client's sink, or a pile of paper grocery bags near the recycling. He also frequently has clients who save gift bags and tissue paper, or stockpile cardboard boxes before a move.

But collectors of good bags and boxes must be honest with themselves. We live in a world filled with disposable items that we cannot bear to dispose of, and our collections can tip over into clutter. If your big plastic bag can no longer contain all of your little plastic bags, or you find that your pile of luxe shopping bags has grown unwieldy, perhaps it's time to reconsider your cache.

"I think it's perfectly fine if you want to keep stuff ... if you both have the space and if you're also planning to use it," says Jones. But if you never end up putting those bags back into service, or if seeing them stresses you out, it's best to get rid of them, he advises. (He recommends taking your single-use plastic bags to a grocery store, which often collects them. You might also consider trying to avoid them altogether in favour of reusable totes.)

"I think the instinct for the most part is conservation, not wasting, reusing," says Jaime Hecht, a D.C.-area professional organizer who founded Aunt Jaime Organizes. People hold on to them with the notion that "this will have a purpose."

When Hecht is trying to get clients "to build the muscle" of getting rid of stuff, she often starts with disposable bags and boxes. "Never has anyone texted me and been like, 'Oh, Jaime, you made me get rid of those bags. I haven't stopped thinking about it,'" she says. "Once it's out of the house it's like, poof, out of your mind. You do not regret it one second."

The Washington Post



Jamie Campion pets one of her Southdown Babydoll sheep as it grazes in the backyard of she and her husband’s property in Tennessee. *GEORGE WALKER IV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

HALELUYA HADERO
and ANNE D’INNOCENZIO

NEW YORK They’re adorable. They require less food and space. And without much coaxing, they might help cut the grass.

Americans are showing more interest in owning miniature cows, goats, donkeys and other diminutive farm animals, a trend driven by hobby farmers looking for easy-to-manage livestock and homesteaders who like the idea of having a petite pig or a scaled-down sheep as a pet.

Animal breeders say sales of pint-sized farm animals have grown since the COVID-19 pandemic, when more people started raising backyard chickens for fun and fresh eggs. Like chickens, mini farm animals appeal to beginners who want the taste of a rugged, agrarian lifestyle.

“A lot of people don’t have access to several acres, but if they have a one-acre plot, they can keep a miniature cow or a few miniature goats,” said Brian Gazda, who has a small farm in East Idaho and with two friends runs a YouTube channel called Hobby Farm Guys.

Platforms like YouTube and especially TikTok have played an important part in raising the profile of mini farm animals, said Martin Fysh, a vice-president and divisional merchandising manager for rural lifestyle retailer Tractor Supply Co. On any given day, TikTok users put cuteness on parade with videos of tiny blue-eyed goats and two-foot-tall horses that have received millions of views.

But Fysh thinks the trend also reflects a natural progression among customers who started out with a backyard hen coop. In response, Tractor Supply has increased its selection of treats for both mini and regular sized pigs, and goats.

“They’re seen as part of the extended family,” Fysh said.

While some people buy small farm animals as a stepping-stone to owning larger ones, others don’t have a desire to expand. Some owners of mini farm animals turn their hobbies into side hustles by giving visitor tours, breeding animals, and blogging about their pastoral experiences. But before playing Old MacDonald, newcomers need to weigh the pros and cons, Gazda and other hobby farmers said.

Among the challenges: the volatile nature of prices for each of the types of miniature farm animals. And while they’re cute, they can also be aggressive.

MINI GOATS

Brittany Snow, a high school English teacher in Florida, owns several small-sized Nigerian Dwarf goats. She realized her dream of living on a farm three years ago when her family moved from the Jacksonville suburb of Middle-

Mini farm animals ARE ADORABLE

There’s also a growing demand for them



Lisa Moad, owner of Seven Oaks Farm in Hamilton, Ohio, pets her miniature horse and miniature donkey. She operates a therapy farm for older people and others. *EMILEE CHINN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

burg to nearby Melrose. She said her family wanted to be more self-sustaining after the pandemic and now sources its own dairy products, such as milk and eggs. She sticks mostly with miniature animals because they’re easier to take care of and cost less to acquire and feed.

Snow, 32, started with four Nigerian Dwarf goats: Buttercup, Snowflake, Cash and Peanut. The herd has since expanded to include Pancake and Oreo, the kids of Peanut and Buttercup.

Snow purchased the Nigerian Dwarf goats intending to milk them to make cheese and products like soap and lotion. But that hasn’t worked yet because goats only lactate after giving birth, and Buttercup only recently had kids. “The past few years have been a learning curve,” Snow said.

Mini goats are one of the most popular entry-level mini animals. In the past year, animal breeders

have registered roughly 8,330 mini goats with the Miniature Dairy Goat Association. That’s a 73 per cent jump from the 12 months before July 2021, when registrations — mostly for newborn females sought after by breeders — totalled just under 4,800, said Angelia Alden, a business operations manager for the North Carolina-based organization.

Many folks who favour mini goats, however, tend to sell them after a few years because it can be challenging — and expensive — to take care of them, Alden said. Rising animal feed costs can be a headache, as is finding adequate medical care due to a shortage of farm veterinarians.

MINI COWS AND DONKEYS

A farm animal can be both mini and mighty. Some of the four-legged stars on social media are furry cows that can weigh 500-600 pounds. The smallest, which

stand under three feet in height, are known as micro-miniatures. The slightly bigger miniatures can be as tall as 42 inches, according to Allie Sine, a TikTok creator with more than 737,000 followers. Videos showcasing some of her mini cows have got millions of views.

Sine, 28, launched her own business breeding and selling mini cows in 2020 after reselling a sick mini cow that cost US\$350 for \$5,000. Last year, she sold about 190 calves through her Missouri-based business, Mini Moos LLC. The calves were roughly split between mini and micro-mini cows that can cost from \$2,000 to \$30,000.

“Everything just skyrocketed,” Sine said.

Others report a similar boom. Kim Furches, who owns a farm with her husband, Ken, in West Jefferson, N.C., said the couple bred mini donkeys for about 20 years and currently own dozens of Mediterranean miniature don-

keys, which stand three feet high or less.

Before the pandemic, they would typically sell about eight donkeys per year and count themselves lucky if they received a couple thousand dollars for one. They now sell about 20 per year. The last mini donkey sold for \$7,500, Furches said. There are some she’s only willing to sell for \$9,000 or more.

NEW TYPES OF ‘EXOTIC’ PETS

Though some of their customers plan to breed and sell mini animals, too, many say many are just looking for “exotic” pets, Gazda said.

Earlier this year, Jamie Campion, 41, and her husband, Jeff, bought two Southdown Babydoll sheep from a local breeder near their home in Thompson’s Station, Tenn., for \$800 each. The couple moved from Chicago in March 2022 after the pandemic made them rethink their lifestyle. They now live in a modern-style farmhouse built on an acre of land.

While Biscuit and Buttermilk have become excellent lawn trimmers, Jamie Campion said she considers the animals — which weigh about 70 pounds and stand about two feet high — similar to a dog or a cat.

“They eat the grass, so we don’t even have to buy food (for the sheep), on a weekly basis,” said Campion who discovered the breed on Instagram.

But it can be challenging. One time, Jeff Campion tried to inject one of the sheep with oral medication to treat parasites, and it tore his bicep.

But more often, the sheep give her joy. Jamie Campion recalls taking them out on a snowy day for a walk in the neighbourhood, without a leash.

“They just followed right behind,” she said. “There’s a whole sheep and shepherd relationship.”

Miniature animals offer therapy. Others see therapeutic benefits.

Lisa Moad, who is the owner of Seven Oaks Farm in Hamilton, Ohio, and has 13 miniature horses and three regular-size horses, operates a therapy farm for older people and others. She also used to take the miniature horses to local nursing homes and hospitals. But since the pandemic, she has spent most of her time conducting online training for those looking to embrace the same mission.

That includes teaching horses how to manoeuvre around wheelchairs and into elevators of hospitals. She said her miniature versions still weigh 175 to 200 pounds, though much less than her regular horses, which range from 1,200 to 1,500 pounds.

“They’re docile, but they can get frightened easily,” she said. “You just can’t walk into a hospital with a horse.”

*The Associated Press**